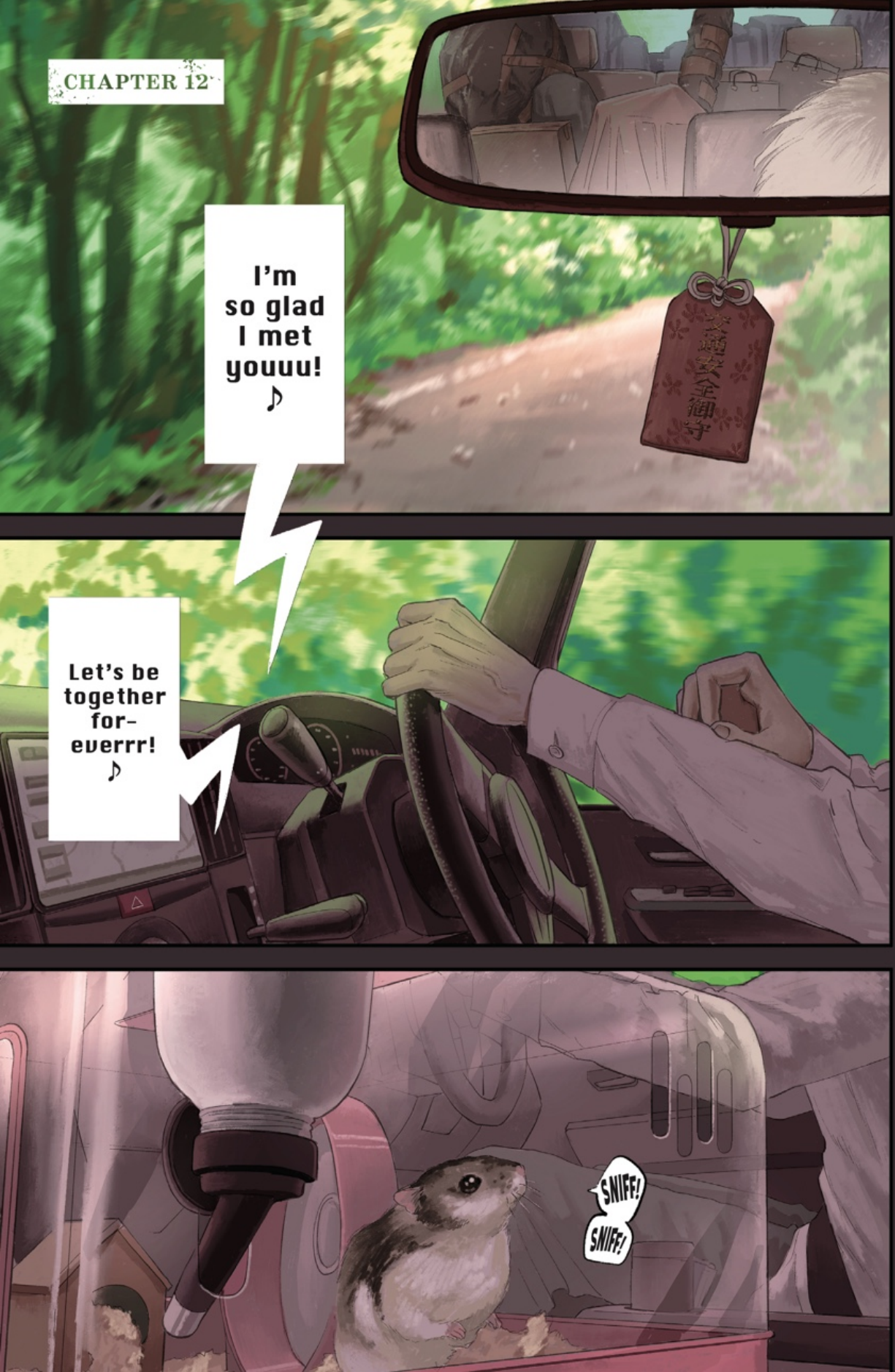
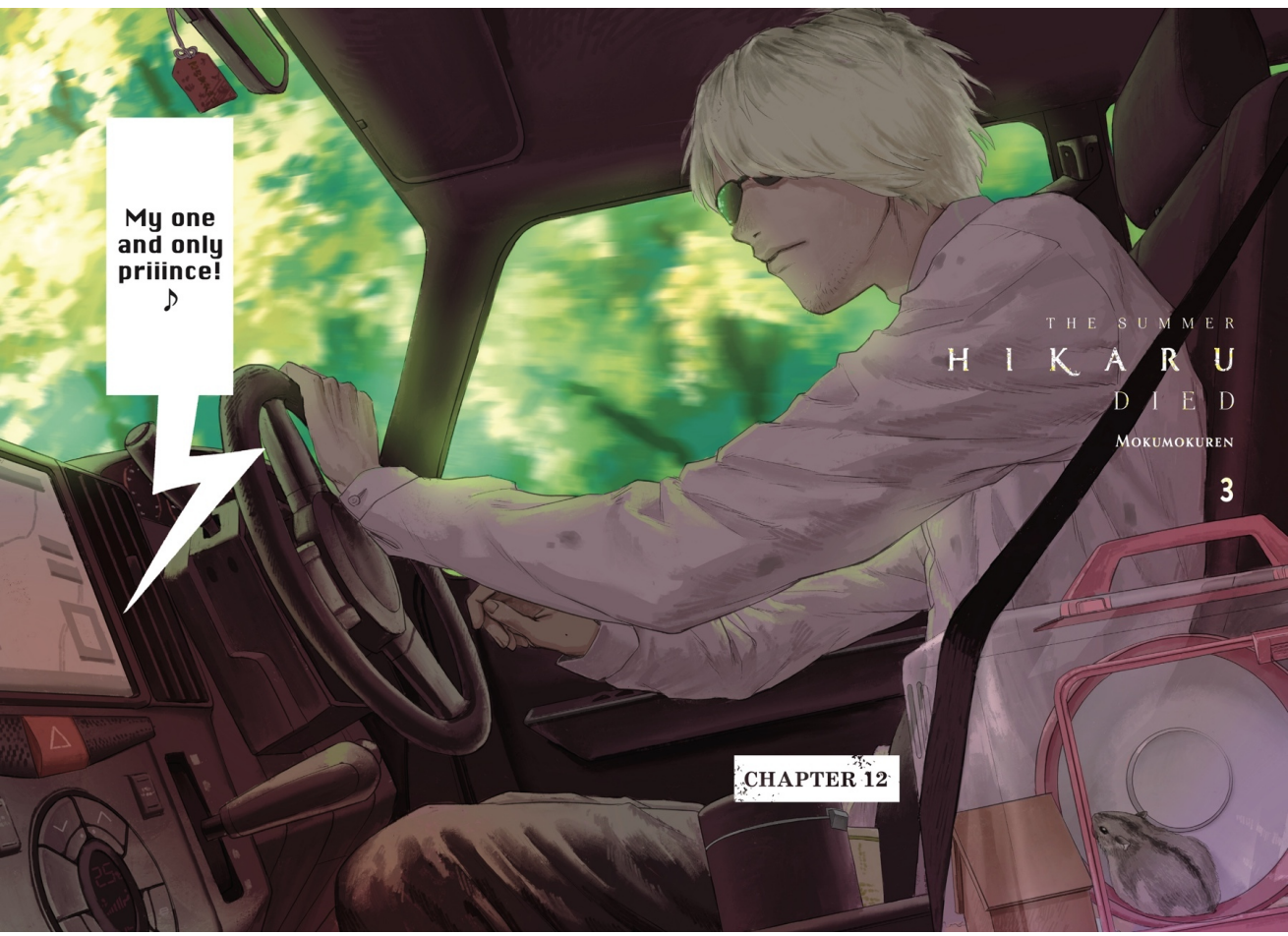
MOKUMOKUREN

3

THE SUMMER HIKARU DIED


CHAPTER 12
I'm so glad I met youuu! ♪
交通安全御守
Let's be together for-everrr! ♪
SNIFF!
SNIFF!


My one and only priiince! ♪
THE SUMMER
HIKARU
DIED
Mokumokuren
3
CHAPTER 12

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バタン
SHUT
BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
…

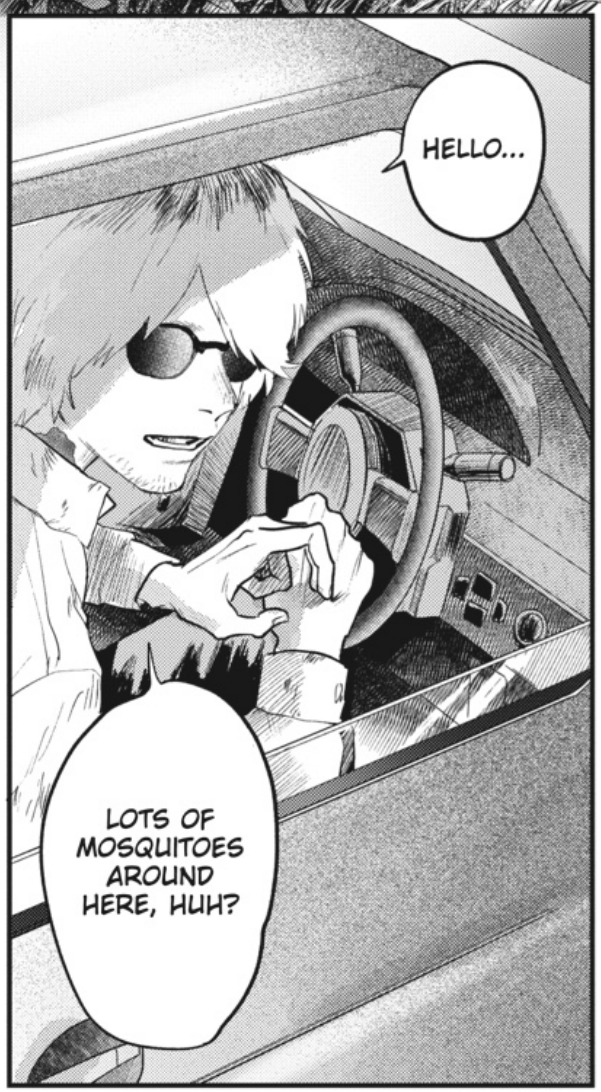
ZSH
ZSH
THE HAMSTER...
...ISN'T MAKING A FUSS.
...
IS THIS REALLY OKAY?
HMM?

BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZ
BZZH BZZH BZZH
CHITTER...
AROUND HERE?
BZZH BZZH BZZH
ZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
CAW...
CHITTER...
BZZH BZZH BZZH BZ
SQUEAK!
ガサッ
RUSTLE
AH, WHAT'S THIS...?

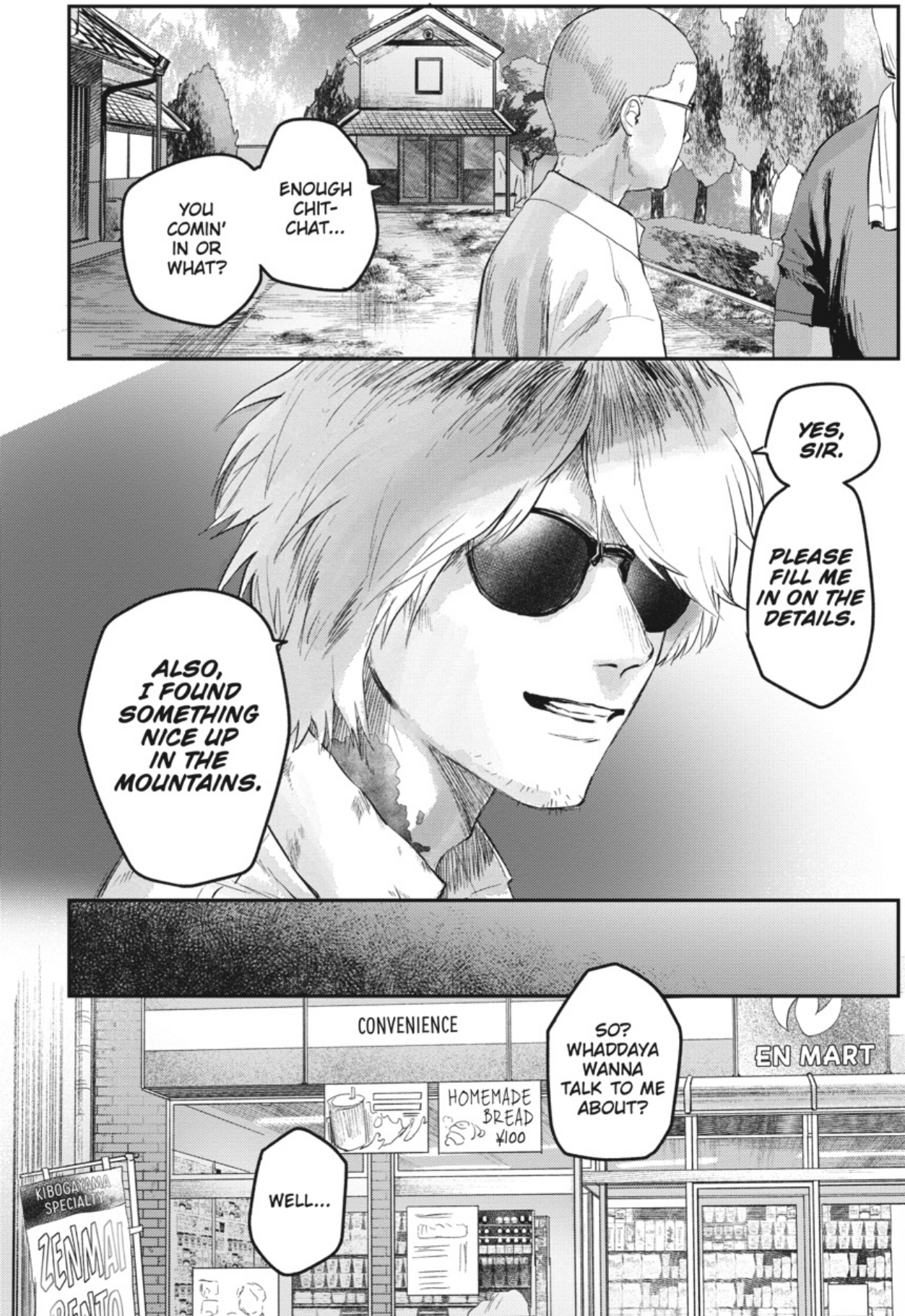
ブロロロ...
VROOM
TH-
THUMP
WHOA!
THE HELL?

SKRIT
YOU OKAY, LITTLE BUDDY?
...OH, JUST A CRACK IN THE ROAD...
Thank youuu. Let me say at least that much. ♪

TAKEDA RESI-DENCE
BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
CHRP
CHRP
BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
CHRP


HELLO...
LOTS OF MOSQUITOES AROUND HERE, HUH?

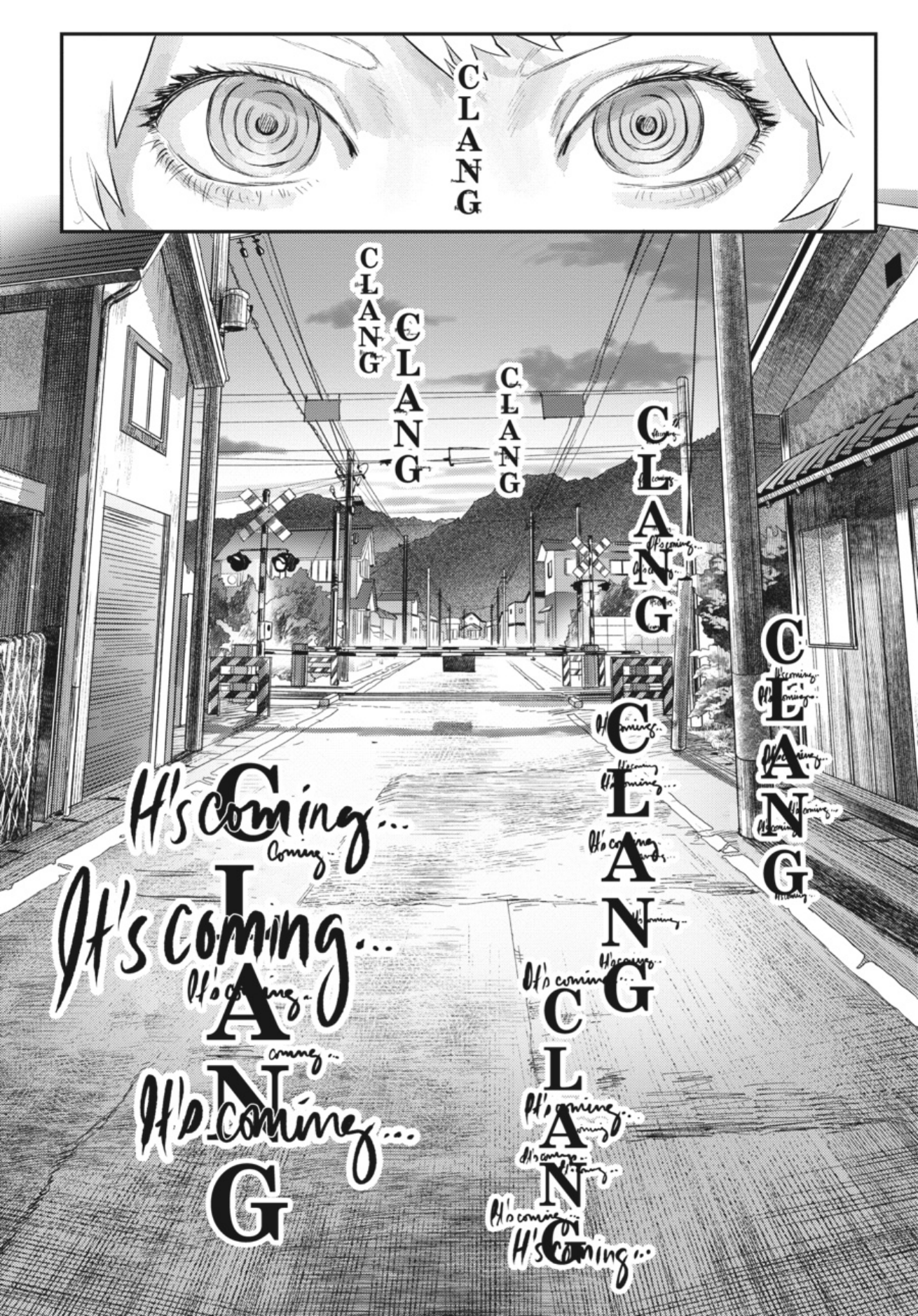
I SEE YOU AIN'T CHANGED NONE. ALWAYS LOOKIN' A MESS...
DA HA HA HA!
"THOSE THINGS" ARE MORE ATTRACTED TO ME WHEN I'M LOOKIN' ROUGH, Y'KNOW?
OH, THIS? IT'S ON PURPOSE.
AHEM!
STARE
HMM...


ENOUGH CHIT-CHAT...
YOU COMIN' IN OR WHAT?
YES, SIR.
PLEASE FILL ME IN ON THE DETAILS.
ALSO, I FOUND SOMETHING NICE UP IN THE MOUNTAINS.
CONVENIENCE
EN MART
HOMEMADE BREAD ¥100
SO? WHADDAYA WANNA TALK TO ME ABOUT?
WELL...
KIBOGAYAMA SPECIALTY
ZENMAI BENTO

TAKESHITA-KUN FROM CLASS 4 ASKED TO SEE ME THE OTHER DAY.
HUH?
FOR REAL?
TAKE-SHITA-KUN...
HE'S THAT POPULAR GUY?
YEP!
I WAS ALL LIKE, "WHAT!? NO WAY!"
DON'T TELL ME HE...

HE CHALLENGED ME TO AN ARM-WRESTLIN' MATCH IN FRONT OF ALL THE BOYS IN HIS CLASS!
AH HA HA HA!
FELT LIKE ONE OF THEM UNDERGROUND FIGHTS I SAW IN A MOVIE ONE TIME.
AND I WHOOPED HIS ASS!
GEEZ!
NOW I'M GONNA END UP FAMOUS FOR BEIN' AN ARM-WRESTLIN' CHAMP!
YOU OUGHTTA BE A LEGEND!
UGH, NO!
AH HA HA...
ANYWAY, I BEST GET GOIN'.

RIGHT. SEE YA TOMOR-ROW!
...OH.
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
YA MIGHT WANNA AVOID THAT CROSSIN' TODAY...
AGAIN? ...WELL, YER INSTINCTS HAVE NEVER BEEN WRONG.
ALL RIGHT, THEN.


CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
It's coming...
It's coming...
It's coming...
It's coming...
It's coming...
It's coming...
It's coming...
It's coming...

TMP
SPLASH

BURBLE
...!

GONK
SCRATCH

KFF!
YO... SHIKI !!
SPLASH
I LET MY GUARD DOWN...
...AND NOW THAT THING GOT INSIDE YOSHIKI AND IS USIN' HIM AS A SHIELD...!
CHOMP

YOU BAS-TARD ...
BWOOSH
SNAP
SHLRP

DRIP
DRIP
WH...
...AT?
...HUH?
スルッSLIP
SPLISH
WH—
WHAT...
...WAS I DOING...?
HAAH...
HAAH...
PHEW!
TH...
THANK GOOD-NESS...

チラッ
GLANCE
ぱん
POP
ギュッ
SQUIK
HIKARU
...
YER
BLEED-
IN'...
WHAT'M
I DOIN'
HERE...?
DRIP
DRIP

WHAT'RE YA SORRY FOR?
I TOLD YA, DIDN'T I? SOMETHIN' ABOUT YOU DRAWS ATTENTION FROM THOSE THINGS.
CROAK CROAK CROAK
KREEREE
KREEREE
SORRY.
NO...THIS IS ON ME FOR LETTIN' IT GO BEFORE...
IT'S A GOOD THING YOU'VE BUILT UP SOME RESISTANCE TO 'EM.

WHAT IF I END UP TRYING TO KILL HIM AGAIN?
I CAN'T GET IT OUT OF MY HEAD.
ALL I CAN REMEMBER IS THE SENSATION OF ME PLUNGIN' HIKARU INTO THE WATER WITH MY HANDS.
I WAS JUS' SAYIN' HOW I WAS GONNA PROTECT YOU, AND THEN ALL THIS HAPPENED. I'M 'BOUT READY TO CRY.
BUT I'M REAL GLAD YOU CAME BACK...
KREEREE
WHY D'YOU CARE ABOUT ME THAT MUCH...?
YOU...
KREEREE

...
WANNA GO CATCH FROGS OR SOMETHIN'?
HAAH... LET'S CHANGE THE SUBJECT!
...NOT SO SURE MYSELF. I JUST MOVED WITHOUT THINKING...
...HEH.
NAW.
THAT'S TOO COUNTRY FOR ME.
AWW...
YOU HATE THE COUNTRY, HUH?
WELL, I LOVE IT. LOTSA STUFF OUT HERE YOU WON'T FIND IN THE CITY.
REEE
KREEREE

SMILE
BESIDES, YER ALWAYS HAVIN' FUN NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE.
I KNOW IT AIN'T ALL BAD.
I JUST FEEL LIKE IT AIN'T WHERE I BELONG...
I SURE WILL!
OH, HIKARU-KUN, YOU HAVIN' DINNER WITH US?
...BUT YOUR UNIFORMS SHOULD BE JUST ABOUT DRIED BY NOW.
NOT SURE IF YOU BOYS WERE PLAYING IN THE RIVER OR NOT...
IF THAT MONSTER HAD ATTACKED KAORU OR MOM...

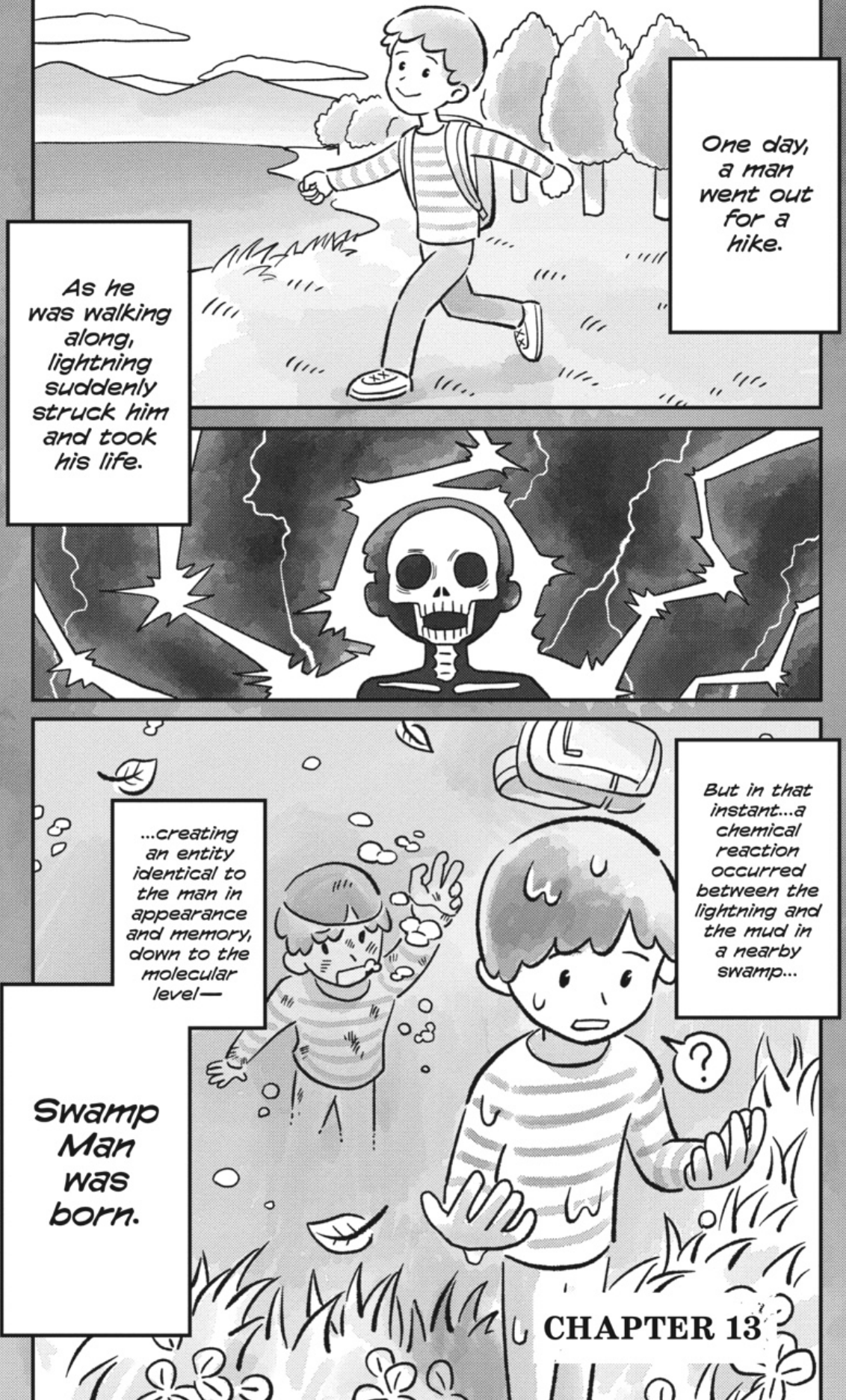
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CAUTIO

CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG

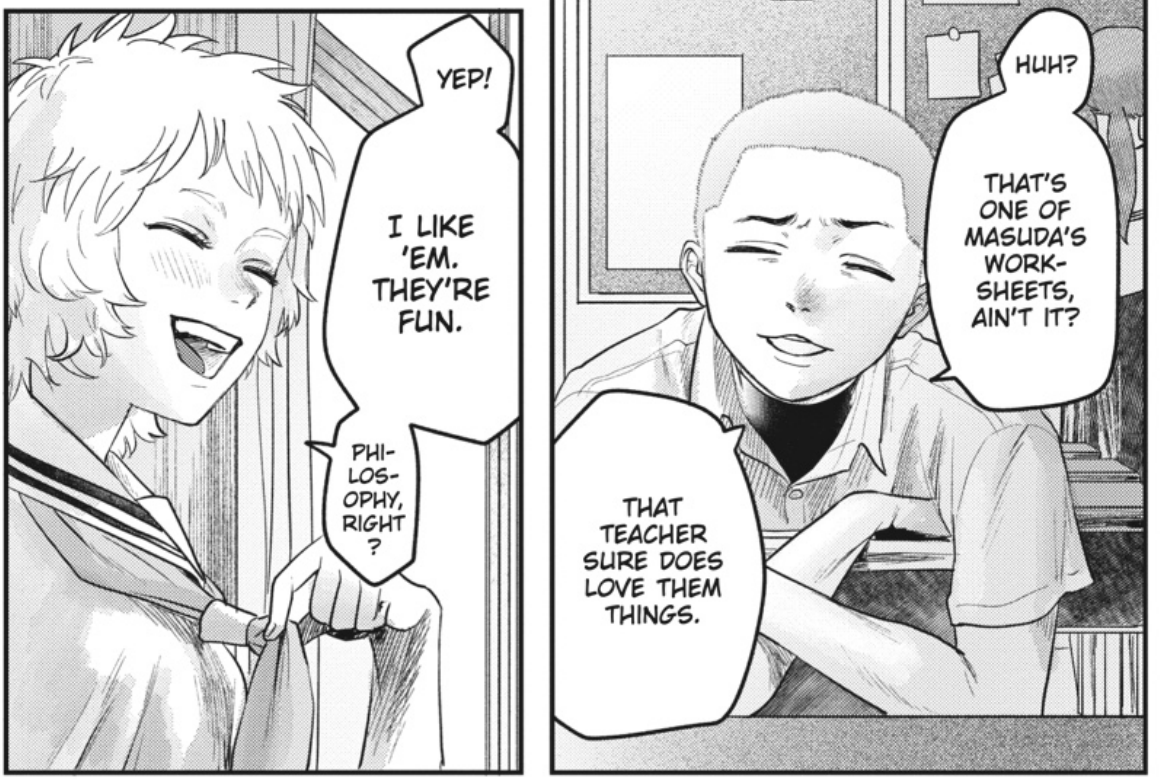
SNAP
PHEW...
ダンス部
DANCE CLUB LIFE
KTNK
KTNK
KTHNK
...I REALLY...
...REALLY DON'T WANNA BE DOIN' THIS...
...BUT THERE'S JUS' TOO MANY OF 'EM...

CHAPTER 12 END

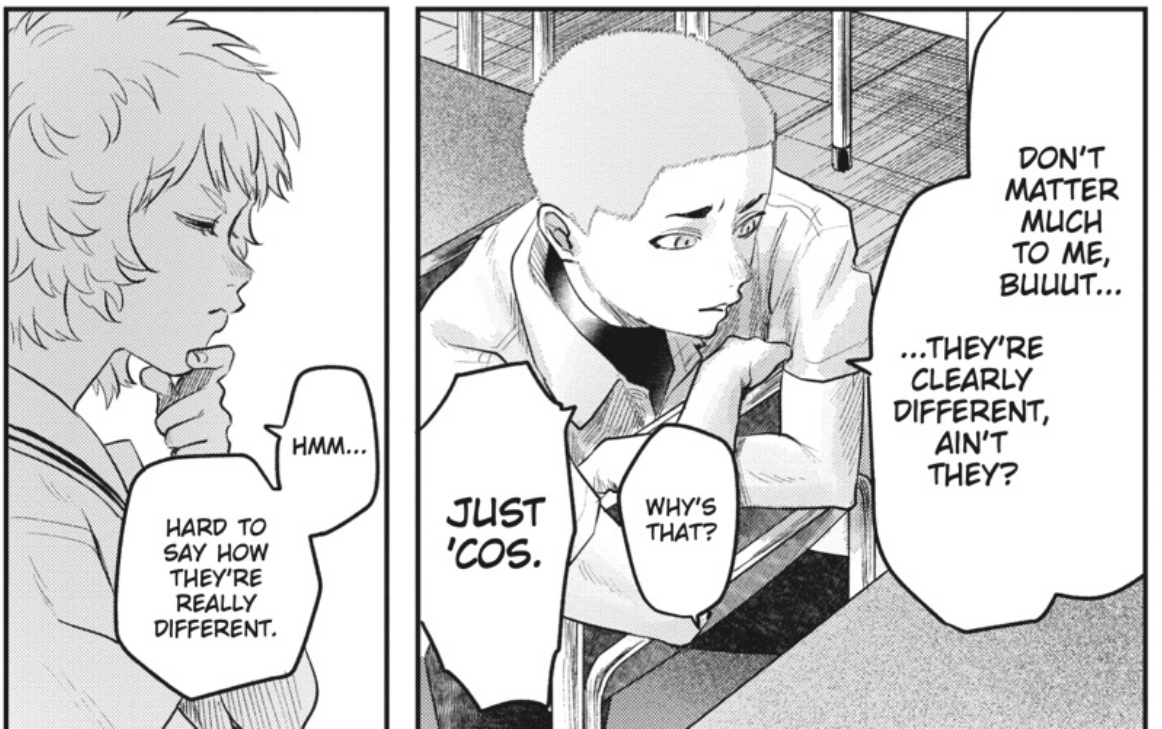
MY CLOTHES FEEL GROSS...
...


One day, a man went out for a hike.
As he was walking along, lightning suddenly struck him and took his life.
But in that instant...a chemical reaction occurred between the lightning and the mud in a nearby swamp...
?
...creating an entity identical to the man in appearance and memory, down to the molecular level—
Swamp Man was born.
CHAPTER 13

Afterward, the entity returned home...
LOOKS LIKE I SURVIVED BY SOME MIRACLE.
...and continued living the man's life without even realizing that he was now Swamp Man.
"IN THIS CASE, WOULD YOU SAY...
"...SWAMP MAN AND THE MAN WHO DIED ARE THE SAME PERSON?"...
What is a thought experiment?


HUH?
THAT'S ONE OF MASUDA'S WORK-SHEETS, AIN'T IT?
THAT TEACHER SURE DOES LOVE THEM THINGS.
YEP!
I LIKE 'EM. THEY'RE FUN.
PHI-LOS-OPHY, RIGHT?

"SWAMP MAN"...
WHAT DO Y'ALL THINK?


DON'T MATTER MUCH TO ME, BUUUT...
...THEY'RE CLEARLY DIFFERENT, AIN'T THEY?
WHY'S THAT?
JUST 'COS.
HMM...
HARD TO SAY HOW THEY'RE REALLY DIFFERENT.

I MEAN, HUMANS REGENERATE THEIR CELLS AN' STUFF, SO WE DON'T HAVE THE SAME CELLS WE HAD A FEW YEARS AGO.
AIN'T THAT THE SAME THING?
YEAH, YER RIGHT ABOUT THAT...
BUT THE REAL GUY'S DEAD AN' GONE IN THE SWAMP.
SO HE'S A DIFFERENT PERSON, AIN'T HE?
'COS FOR A MOMENT, THEY BOTH EXISTED AT ONCE.
OH.
YEAH, YER RIGHT.
THAT'S PRETTY SHARP OF YOU TO SAY, MAKI.
IF THE TWO OF THEM EXISTED, THEY COULD BOTH LEAD SEPARATE LIVES.

BUT FROM THE OUTSIDE THEY'LL ALWAYS LOOK LIKE THE SAME PERSON.
AT THE END OF THE DAY, WE CAN ONLY JUDGE OTHERS BY HOW WE SEE 'EM...
UGH, I DON'T GET IT!
IT DON'T MATTER ANYWAY!
SO WHO EVEN CARES!
YEAH, I HEAR YA.
IT'S A TOUGH ONE.
WHAT QUALIFIES A PERSON TO BE THEMSELVES?
THEIR MEMORIES? THEIR CELLS? ...THEIR EXPERIENCES?

...IS THAT THING "HIKARU"?
IF I LOOK AT IT FROM ANOTHER ANGLE...

...WHAT TRULY KILLS A PERSON?
TO THEM, HIKARU'S ALIVE.

OH!
THAT'S RIGHT! I GOTTA RETURN THE GYM CLOTHES I BORROWED FROM HIKARU!
HUH !?
YOU BORROWED GYM CLOTHES FROM A GUY!?

AND ALL THE GIRLS' CLOTHES'RE TOO SMALL!
SHUT UP! I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE SITTIN' OUT WATCHIN' SWIM PRACTICE, AND HIKARU JUST HAPPENED TO BE AROUND.
ゴス
WHOK
'EYYY! MORN-IN'!
...MRR-NIN'...
MM...

AH HA HA!
AH HA!
YOU LOOK SO FUNNY!
WASHED THESE FOR YA! THANKS!
SNIFF
SNIFF
OHH...
THANKS...
WHOA!
DO YA NORMALLY SMELL THE THINGS PEOPLE GIVE BACK TO YA?
IT SMELLS DANG GOOD.
ALL GIRLIE AN' STUFF.
MAMA'S PARTICULAR WHEN IT COMES TO SCENTS.
IT'S ALL FLOWERY.

GIRLS ALWAYS SMELL REAL GOOD, HUH?
MAYBE IT'S THE FABRIC SOFTENER THEY USE?
HECK IF I KNOW.
WHY DO GUYS STINK SO MUCH?
BEATS ME...
WHRR

BZZH BZZH BZZH
BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZ
SOARING HIIIGH... ♪
ABOVE THE BLUUUE ... ♪
...MOUN-TAIIINS... ♪
MOUNT TEN-BAAAAN ... ♪
WHRRR

CHIIIIIL-
DREN...
♪
...OF
THE
DAWN...
♪
...
UH,
HOW'D IT
GO AFTER
THAT?
"...YER
OUR
HOPE THAT
SHINES
WITH THE
RISIN'
SUN."
ガターン!!
THUNK
OH,
RIGHT.
GAH
!!

DANG!
TCH!
BIKE GOT A FLAT.
WHAT? YOU SERIOUS? SHOULD WE WALK OUR BIKES HOME, THEN?
AH, DANG IT! WELL, AIN'T THIS SOME SHIT...
I JUST AIN'T HAVIN' NO LUCK. SERIOUSLY.
VROOOM

WELL, WELL!
WHAT'S GOIN' ON WITH YOU TWO?

HA HA!
WELL THEN, HOW 'BOUT I GIVE YA A LIFT? CAN YA GET YER BIKES IN THE BACK OF THE TRUCK?
YEAH.

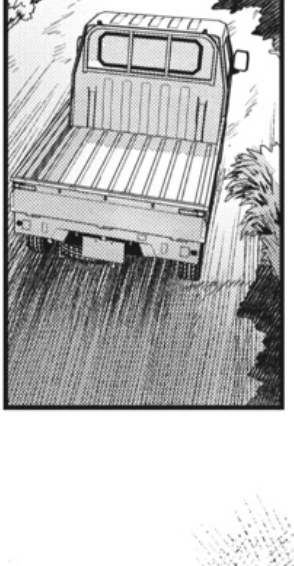
MIKASA-SAN!
SEEMS MY BIKE GOT A FLAT.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
OH, AND THANKS FOR FIXIN' KAORU'S YUKATA THE OTHER DAY.
SHE WAS REAL HAPPY ABOUT THAT.
OHH! GLAD TO HEAR IT!
BEEN A SPELL SINCE KAZUMI GOT TA FIX A GIRL'S YUKATA. I THINK SHE ENJOYED IT.
IF YER SISTER NEEDS ANYTHING ELSE, Y'ALL JUST GIVE A HOLLER.
YES, SIR!
KTNK
KTNK

KTNK
ガタン
RATTLE
ガタッ
KTNK
ガタン

RATTLE
ガタ
RATTLE
ガタ

RATTLE
ガタッ
IT'S SO HOT!



GOING BACK...

...A FEW DAYS EARLIER —

BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
PLOP
PLOP
PLOP

PLOP
ぽちゃん
HA HA!
I'M NOT TRYING TO MESS WITH YOU GUYS OR ANY-THING!
IT'S JUST THAT IT'S SAFE HERE.
TREMBLE
ワナ
TREMBLE
ワナ
NOW, WHY THE HELL DIDJA MAKE US MOVE ...
...TO MI-KASA'S PLACE IN THIS HEAT!?
SLRRP
ズズー

SO...
...HOW ARE THINGS IN THE AREA?
I SEE.
THE LADY WITH THE SCARY FACE, HUH...?
HE DOIN' ALL RIGHT?
AND WHAT ABOUT YOUR FATHER, TAKEDA-SAN?
WELL, THEY AIN'T GOIN' GREAT. OLD LADY MATSUURA DIED IN AN UNNATURAL WAY.
HER DEATH WAS A STRANGE ONE, DESPITE HER NEVER SETTIN' FOOT IN THE MOUNTAINS.
...HE KEEPS SAYIN', "I'M NEXT."
AN' HE'S BEEN HOLED UP IN HIS ROOM EVER SINCE.
DA HA HA!
I KNEW IT!
...NOW, YOU LISTEN HERE!
BAM

SOME-ONE DIED HERE!
AND IT MIGHT WELL BE 'COS YOU AN' THAT DANG COMPANY OF YOURS KEEP INTER-FERIN' IN OUR AFFAIRS!
WELL, I'D THINK HAVING A LARGE CORPORATION PUSH FORWARD WITH DEVELOPMENT DESPITE HAVING NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE AREA WOULD BE MORE CON-CERNING...
SOME-THING ABOUT COMPACT CITY PLANNING, WAS IT?
I WISH YOU'D SHOW A LITTLE GRATITUDE TO MY "COMPANY" FOR PUTTING A STOP TO ALL THAT.
T-TAP トトン
"COMPANY," HUH?
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THAT'S ALL ABOUT...
I'M JUST CONDUCTING A LITTLE RESEARCH IN EXCHANGE...
YOU KNOW HOW THE INDOUS' SON WENT MISSIN', DON'CHA?
WELL, I RECKON THEIR RITUAL FAILED.
AND THAT'S WHY SOMETHIN' STRANGE HAPPENED WITH...THAT THING...

...HA HA!
OH, SPEAKING OF, I WENT TO THAT MOUNTAIN...
...AND FOUND THIS ON THE GROUND.
THAT'S... THE BAG KOUHEI USED TO USE.
SO HIS SON TOOK IT WITH HIM?
OPEN IT AND SEE WHAT'S INSIDE.
WHAT THE—!?
PLUNK
ZZZIP

THE HECK ...
...IS THIS?
A BLACK...
...STONE?
!?
EUGH!
WHAT'S A THING LIKE THAT DOIN' IN THERE...!?
HUH? IT IS ...?
THIS...
...PROBABLY USED TO BE A HUMAN HEAD...
...I THINK.

BEATS ME!
BUT IT HAS POWERFUL PROTECTIVE POWERS.
HA HA!
HAVING THIS ON HAND PREVENTS MOST OF THE NASTY ONES FROM GETTING NEAR YOU.
AT FIRST I THOUGHT THIS LITTLE GUY WAS THE REASON THE MOUNTAIN'S BEEN CLEARED OF ITS IMPURITIES...
WAIT.
...THE IMPURITIES AIN'T THERE NO MORE?
THE IMPURITIES THAT USED TO PERMEATE THE ENTIRE MOUNTAIN ARE NO LONGER THERE.
NOW YOU CAN ENTER THE AREA JUST FINE.
BUT IT'D BE A BIT OF A STRETCH TO SAY IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF THIS THING...

...WHAT'RE YOU SAYIN'...?
THAT'S NOT A GOOD SIGN, Y'KNOW, SEEING AS IT WAS QUITE THE SPECIAL BARRIER.
WHEN I WENT TO CHECK ON IT TODAY, THAT BARRIER WAS PRETTY BANGED UP.
I WANTED TO CREATE A "SAFE SPACE."
ALSO, I WENT AND SET UP A BARRIER OF SORTS AT THE SHRINE HERE ON THE MIKASAS' PROPERTY.
SOME-THING'S COME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN.

.....
... WHAT ...!?
.....
MY GUESS IS IT'S HIDING OUT SOMEWHERE IN SOME OTHER FORM.
.....
AHH...IT FINALLY HAPPENED.
IT DOESN'T FEEL REAL.
IT'S JUST AS KOUHEI SAID...

...WHAT...
...SHOULD WE DO...?
ズズ
SLRRRP
ジャリ
SKRSH
WELL ...

CHAPTER 13 END

HELLOOO!

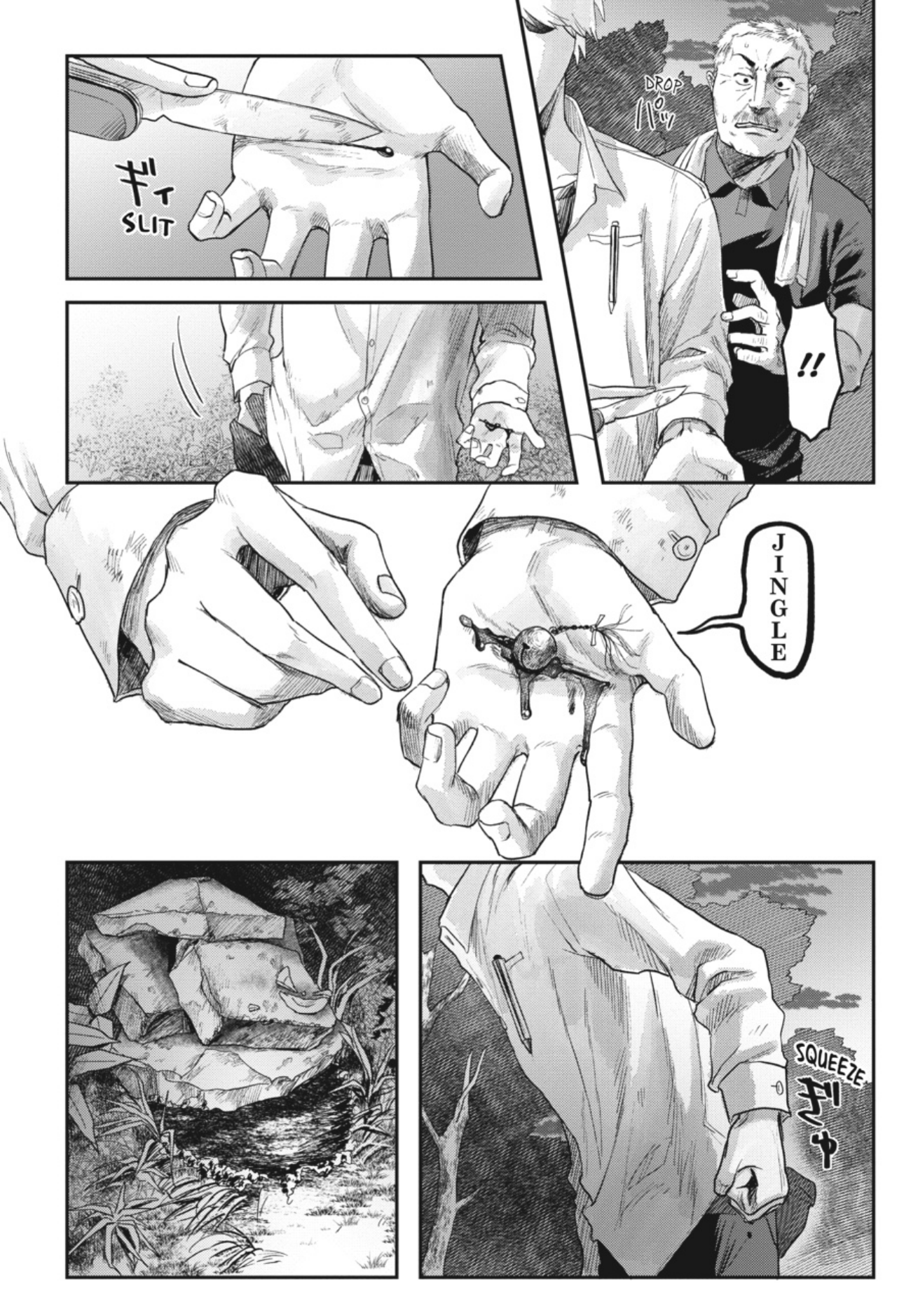
CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK
KREEE
CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK
KREEE
CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK
KREEE
CROAK
CHAPTER 14

I HAVE MY EYE ON YA, SO DON'T GO TRYIN' ANYTHIN' FUNNY, Y'HEAR?
YOU GOT IT, BOSS.
...YOU CAN MAKE SOME KINDA BARRIER OR SOMETHIN', RIGHT?
CAN'T YA SET IT UP OVER THE WHOLE VILLAGE?
OHH, YOU MEAN LIKE THE THING AT MIKASA SHRINE?
I HAD TO GIVE UP ONE OF MY ORGANS FOR THAT, SO I CAN'T MAKE TOO MANY.
O—
OR-GANS?

I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING REMOTELY LIKE A SIXTH SENSE.
-URP!-
SO THIS IS HOW I GOTTA DO THINGS...
IT'S MUCH STRONGER THAN WHAT THE COMPANY RECOMMENDS.
...SO THE BRUISE ON YOUR NECK'S FROM THAT?
AH... YEAH.
IT WAS "TAKEN" ON A JOB.
IT GROWS SOME-TIMES...
...BUT IT'S NOT AN ISSUE.
...
AH.
THERE IT IS.

SOME SORTA SHRINE ...?
WHACK
HYAH!
HYAH!

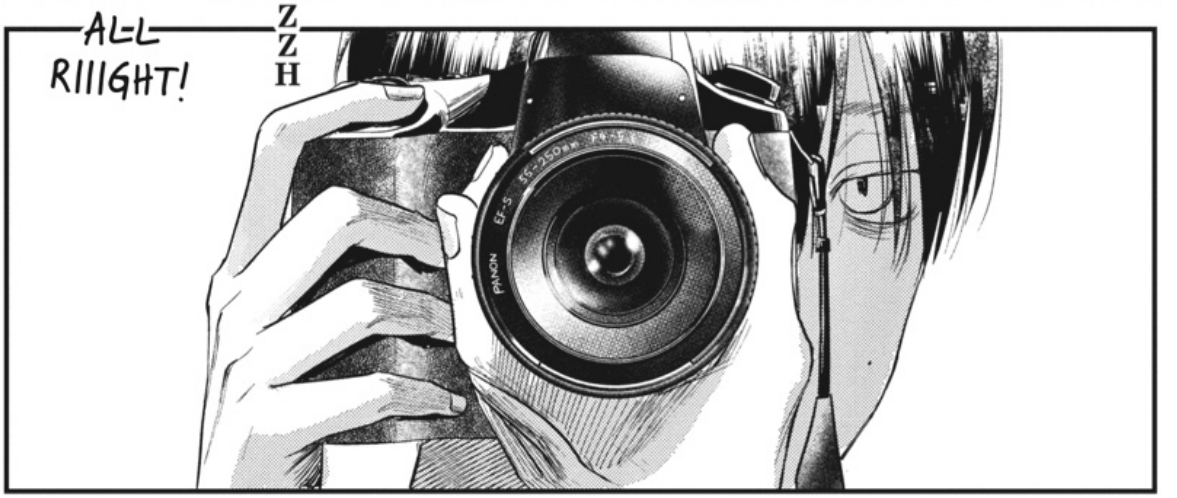
SQUEAK!
HEY!
THE HELL'RE YA DOIN' !?
YOU PUNK!
HUH !?
SEEMS LIKE IT'S STILL BELOW.
CHAK
チャ
ジー
RUMMAGE


ギィ
SLIT
DROP
!!
JINGLE
SQUEEZE
ギャ

WH... WHAT'RE YOU DOIN'...?
TOSS
THIS ONE'S MY HUNTING DOG.
THE THING CAUSING YOU TROUBLE HERE... Y'KNOW, WHAT YOU GUYS ARE CALLING "NOUNUKI-SAMA"...
IT'LL GO AFTER IT.
IMPURITIES LIKE THIS SHOULD BE DRAWN TO SOMETHING LIKE YOUR "NOUNUKI-SAMA"...

I JUST CAN'T SEE HIM BEIN' GOOD FOR THE VILLAGE... HE'LL LEAD THIS PLACE TO RUIN SOMEDAY...
THIS TANAKA FELLA...
...
...BUT IS THERE SOME PART OF ME THAT WANTS THAT?

BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
HEEEY!
I'M GONNA START!


BZZH
ALL RIIIGHT!

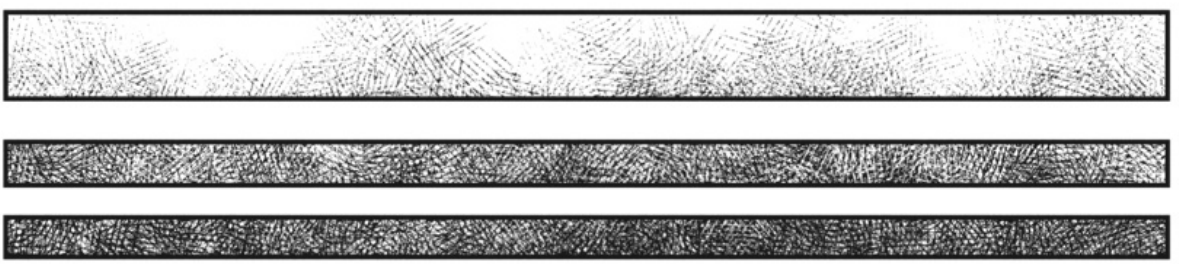
OH! TSUJI-NAKA-KUN?

NO ONE REALLY SHOWS UP FOR PHOTO CLUB...
I JUST HAPPENED TO GET ASKED TO DO THIS.
TEZUKA-SENSEI.
I THOUGHT YA'D BE IN STUDY HALL TODAY. IT'S RARE TO SEE YA DOIN' CLUB ACTIVITIES.

TH... THANK YOU.
Y'KNOW, THAT ONE OF THE CHURCH FROM OVER YONDER.
THAT SO?
YER PHOTO FROM LAST YEAR'S CULTURAL FESTIVAL WAS GREAT.

SPEAKING OF, THERE ARE PLENTY OF CHURCHES IN THIS TOWN.
ISN'T THAT KIND OF RARE FOR A COUNTRY TOWN LIKE THIS?
OHH, ABOUT THAT...
.....
CHRISTIANS WHO WERE PERSECUTED DURING THE EDO PERIOD FLED TO THIS AREA.
THERE'S AT LEAST ONE OF THOSE OLD CHURCHES THAT'S STILL ACTIVE.
BZZH BZZH
HUH ...
BZZH BZZH
OH...THAT EXPLAINS WHY KAME-YAMA-SAN'S FAMILY IS CHRISTIAN...
HM?
BUT WHY WEREN'T THEY PERSE-CUTED HERE?
NOT SURE WHY.
I HEARD IT HAS SOMETHIN' TO DO WITH THE DOMAIN HAVIN' A HARD TIME INTERFERING WITH THINGS HERE.
MAYBE THAT'S WHY?
BUT IT'S TRUE THAT THIS PLACE HAS A HISTORY WITH RELIGION.

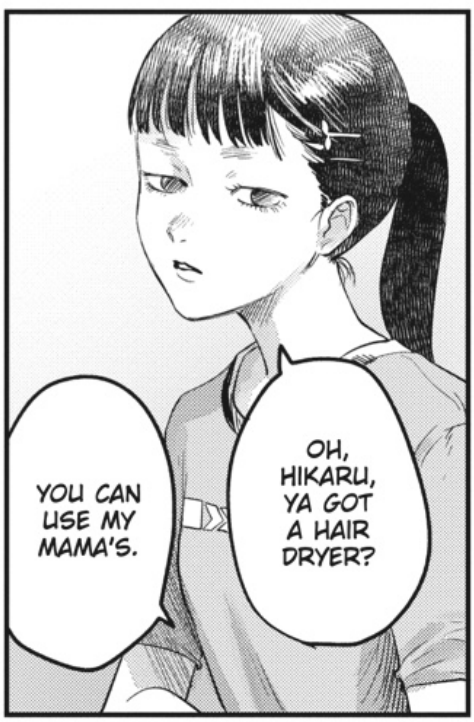
THE DOMAIN HAD A HARD TIME INTERFERING WITH THINGS HERE...?



SUPERSIZE!!
ULTRA☆SPARK DEMON KING
SUPER-SWEET FUN PACK
SMOK
LOOONG
LONG-LASTING
LIKE LIGHTNING
ENOUGH WITH THE SHINING!
SHIFTS OVER TIME
RED & BLUE
COLORFUL
I'M DOIN' THIS ONE.
SUPER-SWEET FUN PACK!
ULTRA ☆ SPARK DEMON KING!

MUSTA BEEN A HASSLE FOR Y'ALL TO COME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE FOR A SLEEPOVER.
IT'S THE WEEKEND, AND MY FOLKS DROVE ME HERE, SO IT'S ALL GOOD!
SURE IS.
YER PLACE IS HUGE, HIKARU!
YA THINK SO?
DING-LING...
DING...
DEMON KING

HOW 'BOUT NASHI-TETSU?
HEY, YOSHIKI, GRAB A GAME FROM MY ROOM.
YEAH!


OH, HIKARU, YA GOT A HAIR DRYER?
YOU CAN USE MY MAMA'S.

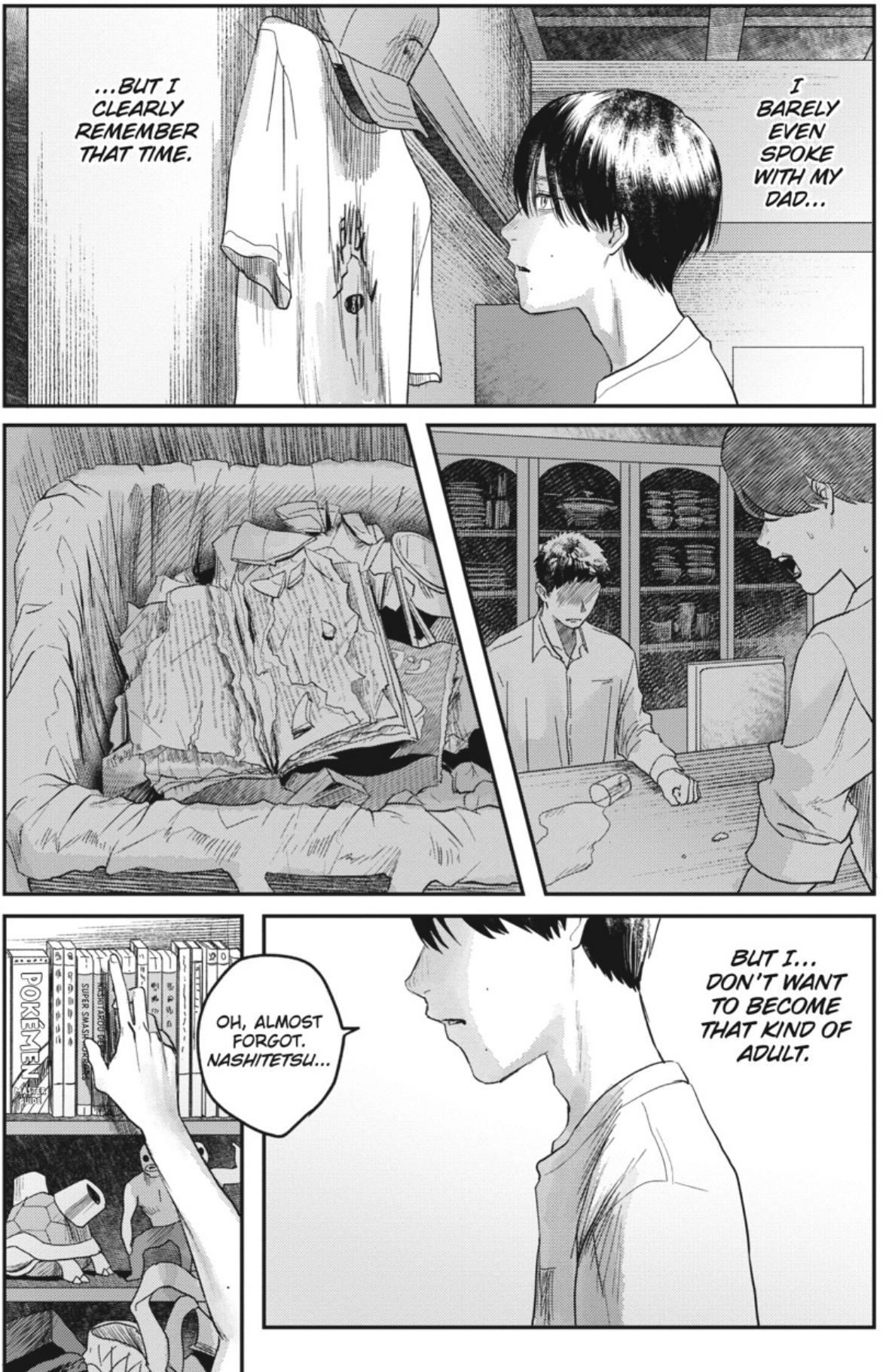
スーーSSSTッ

THMP
きぃ CREAK CREAK ぎぃ
NOTHIN'S CHANGED.
I'VE SEEN IT SOMEWHERE BEFORE...
THIS HAT...
MATSUSHIMA SAW MILL
89

GAB
GAB
MOM?
WHERE ...?
BOOM
BA-BOOM
GAB
YANK
DAD...
DRAFT BEER

...THIS FESTIVAL WAS ORIGINALLY HELD FOR THE GOD OF THAT MOUNTAIN.
HUH...
YEAH...
THAT'S WHY...
...YOU'D BEST NOT GO UP THERE, YOSHIKI.
DON'T GET YERSELF SNATCHED UP.
HEEEY!

OH!
AN' I WON'T TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER.
ME AN' THE BOYS'RE DRINKIN' OVER THAT WAY. COME JOIN US.
.....
I'LL HEAD OVER, THEN.
SO THAT'S WHERE YA BEEN, TOSHI!
HEY, YOSHIKI! IS THE CORN GOOD?
MATSUSHIMA SAWMILL


I BARELY EVEN SPOKE WITH MY DAD...
...BUT I CLEARLY REMEMBER THAT TIME.
BUT I... DON'T WANT TO BECOME THAT KIND OF ADULT.
OH, ALMOST FORGOT. NASHITETSU...
POKÉMEN

ひら
FLAP
POKÉMEN
SUPER SMASH HO
NASHITAROU DEN
スッ
SHF
WHAT'S... THIS THING?
SOMETHING SPILLED ON IT AND GOT IT ALL CRUSTY...
WONDER IF IT'S ALL RIGHT TO THROW OUT.
KRIK
カリッ
KRIK
カリ
RIP

Method
Hichi
the
Daddy
duty of the Indous.
THIS IS HIKARU'S HANDWRITING.
"HICHI"...? "ROLE OF THE INDOUS"?
CRUMPLE

WHOOOOOOA!
COOOOL!
Infinity!!
HOW'S HE SO GOOD AT PRO-NOUNCING THAT?
HE'S GETTIN' ALL HYPE ABOUT THIS.
"HYPE." HA-HA!
THAT'S WILD!

FIREWORKS ARE AMAZIN'...! SO COOOOL!
AH!
OH CRAP!
GIMME A LIGHT!
THE CANDLE WENT OUT?
EVERYONE, LOOK OVER HERE!

AH!
CLICK カチッ
CLICK カチ
THE LIGHTER'S NOT LIGHTIN'!
I THINK IT'S OUT.
I'LL GO GET ANOTHER FROM YAMAHISA.

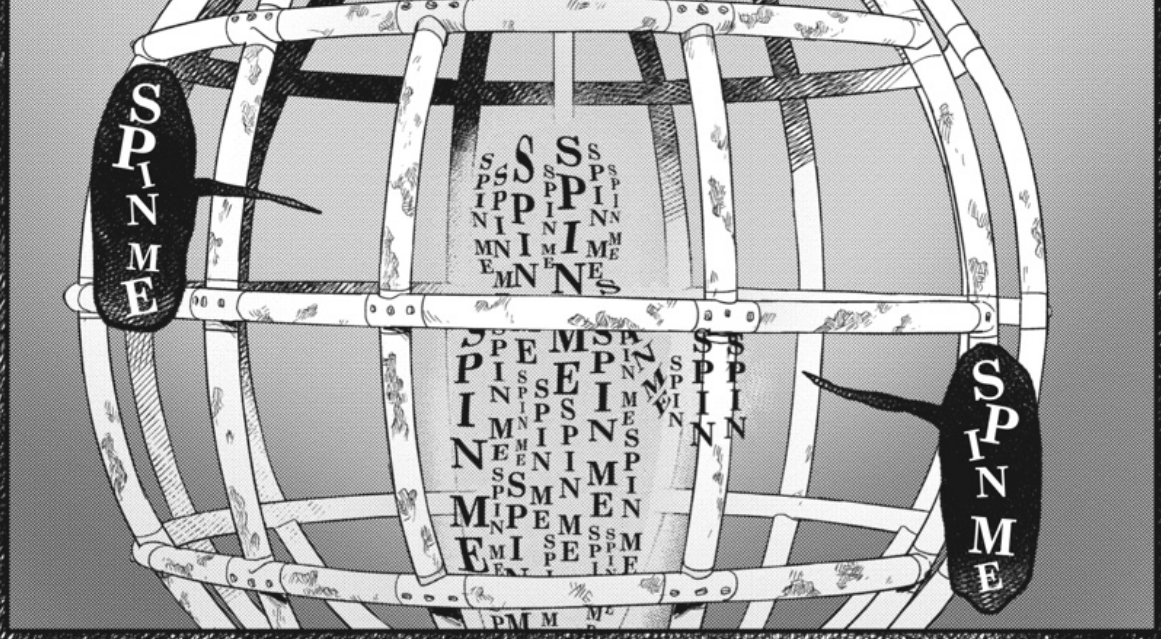
OH...
I'LL COME WITH!
SURE, LET'S GO.
GUESS NOW'S A GOOD TIME TO CLEAN UP A BIT.
BY THE WAY, I HEARD THERE'S GONNA BE A HUGE FIREWORKS EVENT AT THE END OF THE SUMMER.
YEAH.
UHH, I STILL DUNNO!
I HEARD THE SAME. YOU GOIN', MAKI?
HMM ...
...
BUT...
...IT SURE IS HOT, AIN'T IT!?
YEAH.
...I'LL GO CATCH UP WITH HIKARU AND ASAKO RIGHT QUICK AN' TELL THEM TO GRAB SOME ICE POPS.

CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK
CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK
CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK
HEY.
IS THAT THE MOUNTAIN WHERE YOU WENT MISSIN'?
YEP.
SURE IS.
DON'T 'MEMBER MUCH ABOUT IT, THOUGH...
CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK

CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK
I SEE.
KINDA FEELS LIKE EVERY-THING'S GONE BACK TO NORMAL.
CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK
BUT IT FELT LIKE A FUNERAL BACK THEN.
FOR REAL.
I'M GLAD YOU MADE IT BACK...
CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK
BUT, LIKE...
AN' FEEL FREE TO IGNORE ME IF THIS DON'T MAKE NO SENSE, BUT...

...JUST...
...WHO ARE YOU?
CHAPTER 14 END

CHAPTER 15
GRANNY, THERE'S A WEIRD NOISE COMIN' FROM OVER THERE.


SPIN ME
SPIN ME

YEAH.
CAN'T SEE NOTHIN', BUT I SURE CAN HEAR IT.

DO YA HEAR SOMETHIN', ASAKO?

THAT'S 'COS YER A HEARER.
YA BEST NOT ANSWER OR MESS WITH THEM THINGS...
...BECAUSE YER VOICE WILL END UP REACHIN' 'EM ON THE OTHER SIDE...

CAN YOU HEAR 'EM TOO, GRANNY?
I CAN'T HEAR 'EM, BUT I CAN SEE 'EM A LITTLE.
MY BIG SISTER AND MY DADDY COULD SEE AND HEAR 'EM A LITTLE TOO.
'COS IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY.
ARE THEY GHOSTS?
YOU COULD SAY THAT.
Y'SEE, THE WORLD OF THE DEAD OVERLAPS WITH OURS, SO THEY'RE RIGHT BESIDE US.
AN' EVERY NOW AN' THEN, PEOPLE AN' THINGS FROM THE OTHER SIDE END UP OVER HERE DUE TO LITTLE DISTORTIONS.

EHH...? SOUNDS SCARY...
WELL, SOME OF 'EM ARE SCARY, AN' SOME AIN'T.
THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD AND PEOPLE'S LINGERIN' EMOTIONS POOL AND MIX TOGETHER IN THAT OTHER WORLD...
...BEFORE BEIN' REBORN BACK IN THIS WORLD.
IT'S WHAT WE CALL THE NEVER-ENDING CYCLE...
SWIRL
SWIRL
...OF LIFE AND DEATH.
I DON' REALLY GET IT.
HEH HEH.
WHAT I'M SAYIN' IS, SOME ON THE OTHER SIDE AIN'T ALWAYS BAD, AN' SOME HERE AIN'T ALWAYS GOOD EITHER.
BUT THEM THINGS ARE TERRIFYIN', SO YA BEST NOT GET INVOLVED WITH 'EM...

I'M...
...LOOKIN' FORWARD TO MIDDLE SCHOOL.
I'LL FINALLY GET TO SEE YA EVERY DAY!
HEE!
EE HEE!
EE HEE HEE!
AND MY MAMA SAID SHE'S THINKIN' OF JOININ' THE PTA WITH YER MAMA.
YEAH!
SURE IS GREAT THAT OUR FOLKS GET ALONG.
WISH WE'D GONE TO THE SAME ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TOO, THOUGH.
YAMADA SHOP
SUNDRIES
FOOD
YEAH.
BUT WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS SINCE FOREVER...
...SO THIS'LL BE REAL FUN.

KSHAK
WHICH CLUB YA GONNA JOIN?
KSHAK
.....
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK

KSHAK
I'LL JUST IGNORE IT...LIKE I ALWAYS DO...
OH, MAMA!
FINALLY DONE SHOPPIN'?
たっ
TMP
FWIP

!?
WHAT!?
IT SUDDENLY SPED UP...!!
KSHAK KSHAK KSHAK KSHAK
IT'S...
...GOIN' AFTER YUU-CHAN!?
NO, DON'T!
KSHAK.

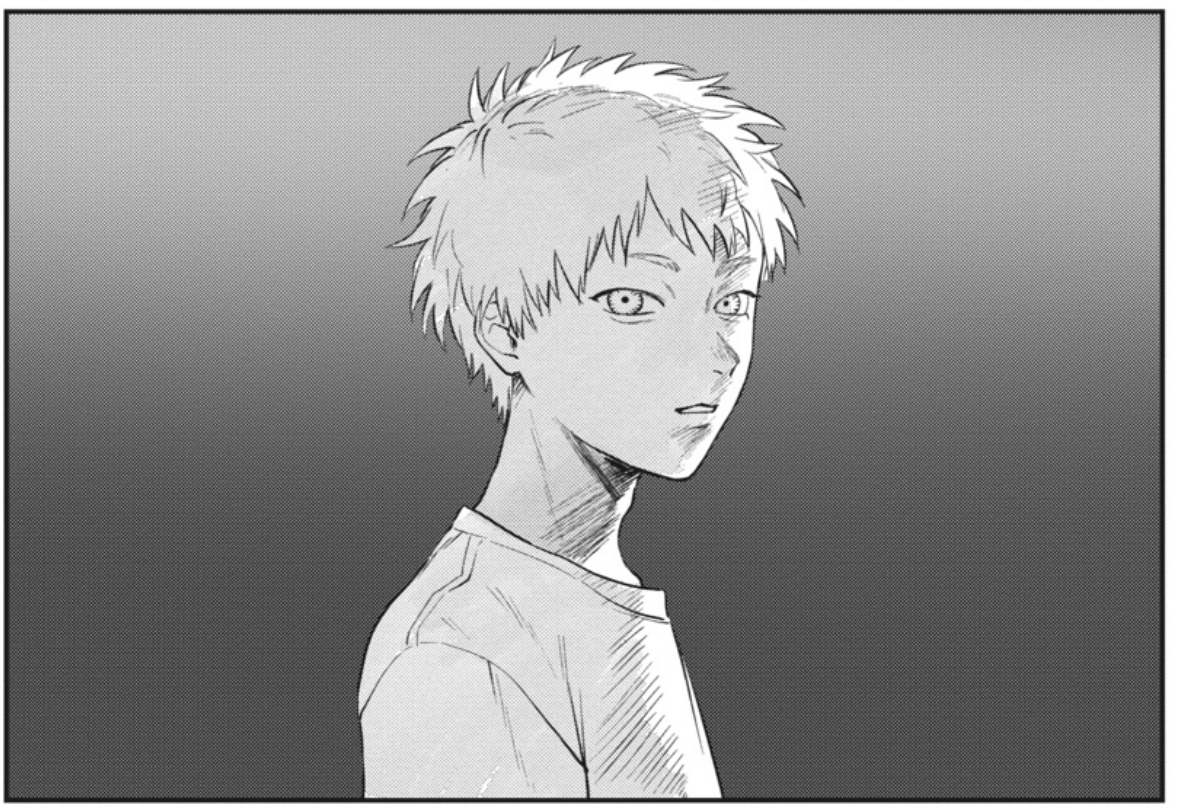
.....
WATCH OUT.
YUU-CHAN!
"WATCH OUT"...?
.....

VWOOM
WHAT ...?
THAT... WAS CLOSE!
MUSTA BEEN GOIN' OVER A HUN-DRED...

IT...
IT TRIED TO PROTECT HER...?
KSHAK
KSHAK
KSHAK

FOLKS FROM THE OTHER WORLD MIGHT BE SCARY...
...BUT I DON'T THINK THEY'RE ALL BAD.
SO...IT SHOULDN'T BE WEIRD TO TALK WITH 'EM.

...JUST...
...WHO ARE YOU?



HOW?
DOES
SHE
KNOW?
V? DOES SHE
ES SHE KNOW? D
V? DOES SHE
ES SHE KNOW? D
V? DOES SHE
ES SHE KNOW? D
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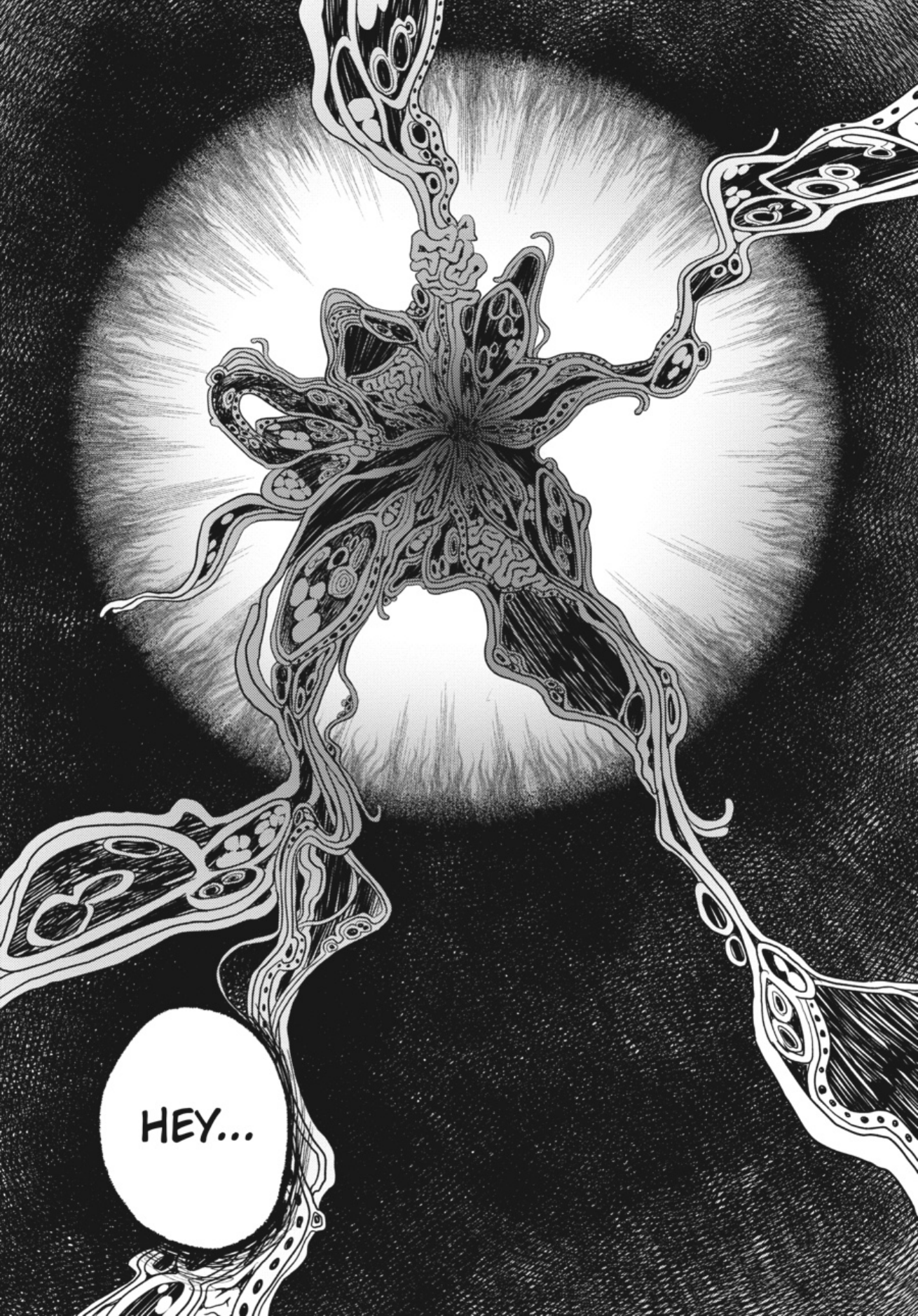

HEY...

JOLT
CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK
CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK CROAK CRO

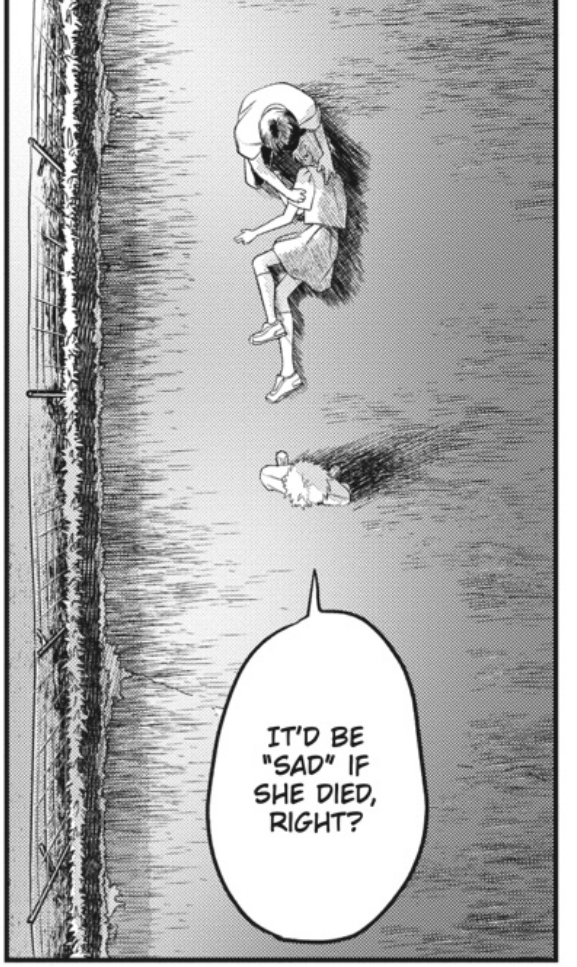
FSH
THUD
ASA-KO!
HEY!!!
HAAAAH…
GULP
WHAT …
…DID YOU DO…?

JUST...
JUST... WHAT...?

I WAS ABOUT TO BE FOUND OUT...
...SO I JUST...

WHA ...?
HUH?
UH...
WHAT'RE YOU...?
HUH?

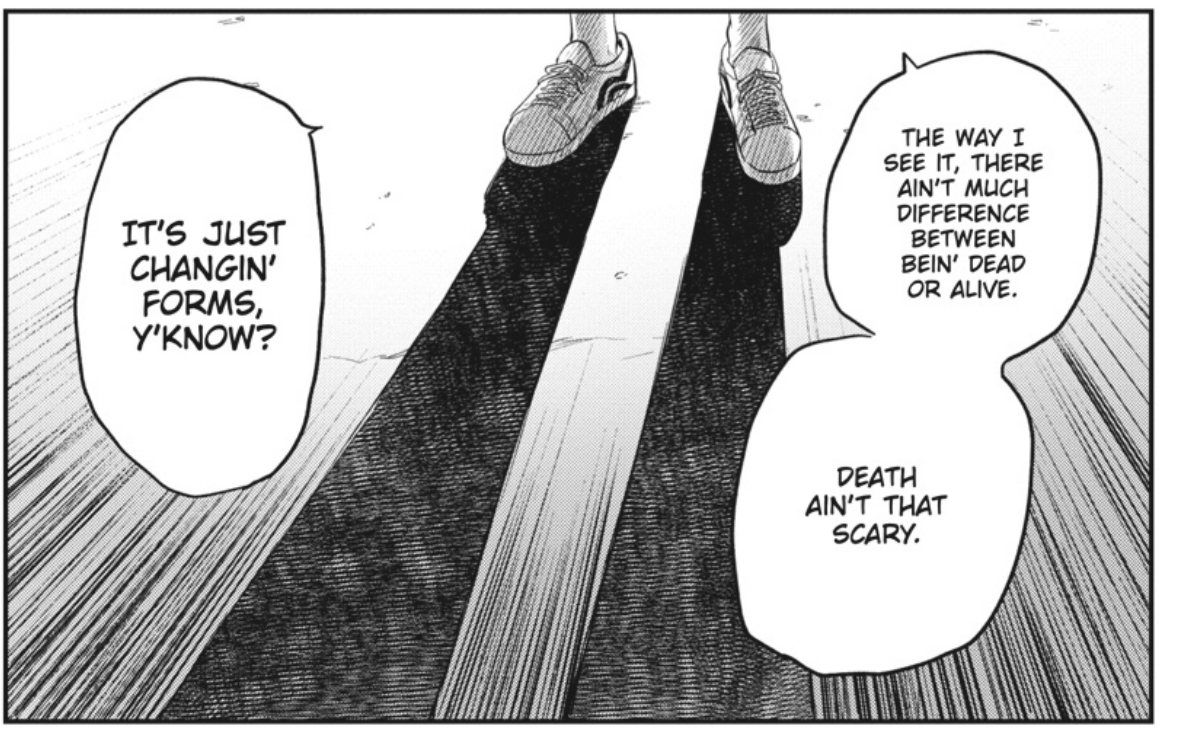
HA HA!
COME TA THINK OF IT...I CAN'T DO THAT, CAN I?
ESPECIALLY TO ASAKO...


IT'D BE "SAD" IF SHE DIED, RIGHT?

HOW COULD YOU...?
HUH?
IT'S SOME-ONE'S LIFE...
THAT'S ...

HUH?
D...
DID YOU TRY TO...
...K...
...KILL HER?

"LIFE"...
BEIN' DEAD, BEIN' ALIVE...
IS THERE REALLY THAT BIG A DIFFER-ENCE?
IS BEIN' ALIVE REALLY MORE IMPOR-TANT?
I AIN'T GOT NO "LIFE," THOUGH...


THE WAY I SEE IT, THERE AIN'T MUCH DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEIN' DEAD OR ALIVE.
DEATH AIN'T THAT SCARY.
IT'S JUST CHANGIN' FORMS, Y'KNOW?

HUH ...?
SO THEN...
...WHEN YA SAID YA DON'T WANNA KILL ME, WAS THAT...
...A LIE...?

IF YOU DIE...
...I WON'T BE ABLE TO EAT ICE CREAM WITH YOU NO MORE...

HUH ...?
NAW, THAT'S DIFFER-ENT...
YER... YER...
...SPECIAL.

YER CONTRA-DICTIN' YERSELF ...!
HOW CAN YOU SAY I'M SPECIAL WHEN YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT A LIFE IS...!!?

HUH?
THAT'S IT...?
THAT'S WHY...?
AIN'T IT THE SAME FOR ASAKO...!?

.....
DIDJA KILL HER?
THAT OLD LADY WHO DIED NEAR HERE... MATSUURA-SAN...WAS THAT YOU, THEN?
.....
YEAH ...

HRK!
GAHK...
BLRH...
EEEUGH...
ボトッ
SPATTER
SPLAT
WHOA ...!
YA PUKED ...!
.....

CHAPTER 15 END

AH..

LOOKS LIKE I...
...PASSED OUT ALL OF A SUDDEN...

HUH?

AH...!
ASAKO ...
HI-KARU!
YOU ALL RIGHT!?

CHAPTER 16

OH.
UMM...
'C...
'COS...
...YER POS-SESSED BY A GHOST...
SO YOU CAN HEAR THE VOICES OF SPIRITS... AND STUFF...?
AN' ALWAYS COULD?
UUU...
IT'S CREEPY, AIN'T IT?

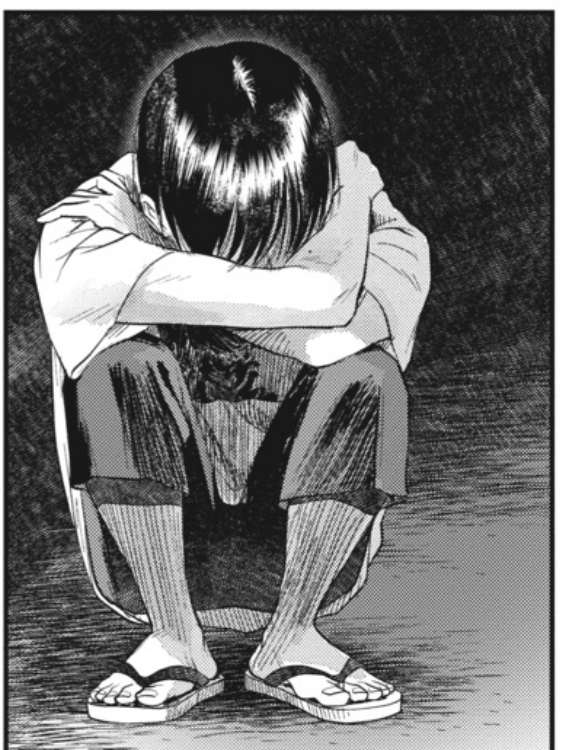
EVER SINCE HIKARU CAME BACK...
...HIS VOICE WOULD SOUND WEIRD SOMETIMES.
OH, YEAH. WELL, I'VE GOTTEN BETTER WITH THAT STUFF LATELY.
AND...
...I FIGURED HE'D BEEN POSSESSED BY SOMETHIN' DANGEROUS...
BUT...
...IT SORTA SEEMS LIKE THAT DANGEROUS THING IS PROTECTIN' YOU?
AND IT SOMETIMES EVEN FELT LIKE IT COULD BE SAFER FOR YOU TO BE WITH HIM.

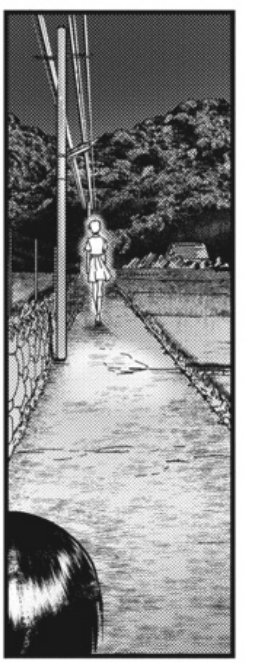
SO...I THOUGHT MAYBE...
...IT WOULD UNDERSTAND ME IF I SPOKE WITH IT.
AND I TRIED TO START A CONVERSATION WITH THE THING INSIDE HIKARU...
AM I IN THE CLEAR?
NO... I BELIEVE YOU.
UNNNGH!
I MUST SOUND CRAZY FOR TELLIN' Y'ALL THIS.
I'M SORRY ...
FORGET WHAT I SAID...

... THANK YOU.

I'M WORRIED YA MIGHT FAINT AGAIN, SO YOU SHOULD HEAD BACK.
OKAY.

YO-SHIKI ...



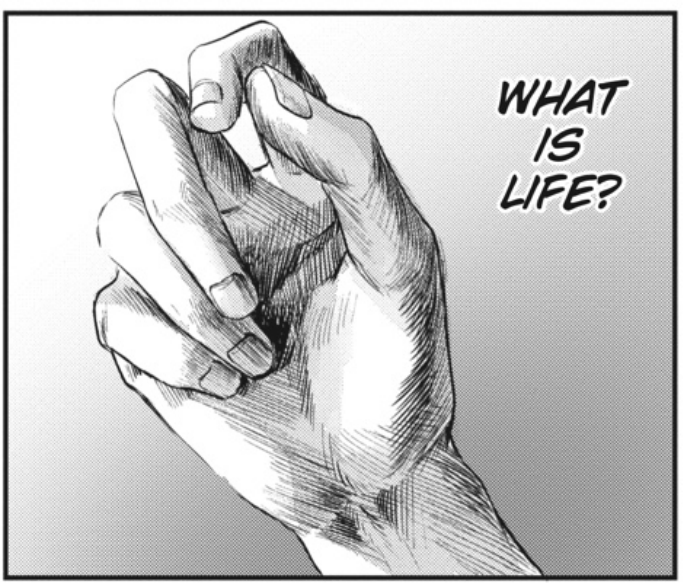


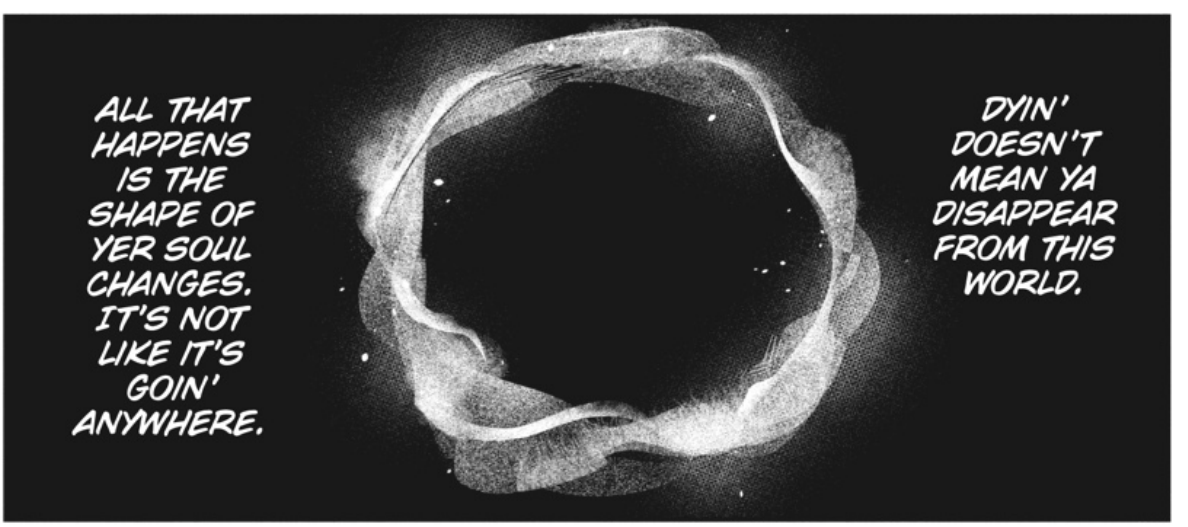
BUMP

WELCOME BACK.
HUH?
WHERE'S YOSHIKI?

OH... WELL, HE, UH...
...WENT HOME...
WHAT!!? WHY!?
WAS IT HIS STOM-ACH!?
HE WASN'T LOOKIN' TOO GOOD...

KREEREEREE
KREEREEREE


WHAT IS LIFE?

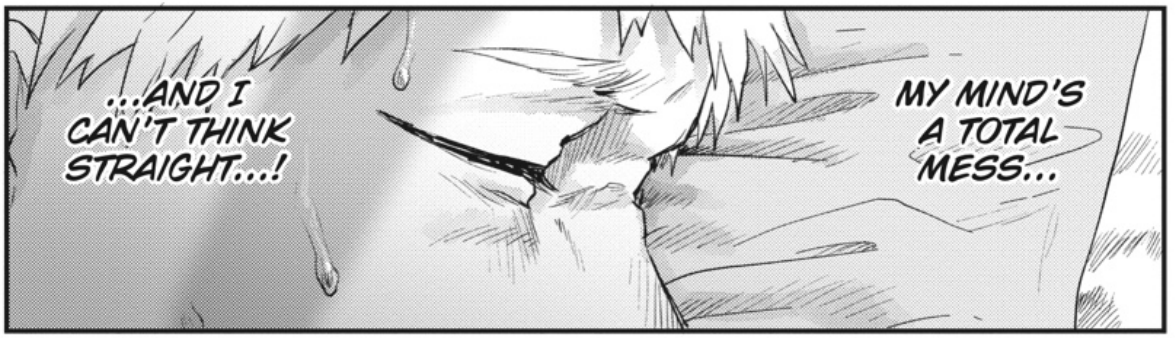

ALL THAT HAPPENS IS THE SHAPE OF YER SOUL CHANGES. IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S GOIN' ANYWHERE.
DYIN' DOESN'T MEAN YA DISAPPEAR FROM THIS WORLD.

IT'S ALWAYS BY YER SIDE.
YER BORN AND YA DIE, BUT YER SOUL DON'T REALLY GO AWAY.

YOSHIKI'S SOUL...

...IS SO PRETTY...

BUT... I DON'T WANT YOSHIKI TO DIE.
WON-DER WHY THAT IS...
AM I THINKING THAT? OR IS "HIKARU"...?


...AND I CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT...!
MY MIND'S A TOTAL MESS...

BZZH BZZH
MAKI'S DADDY IS GIVIN' US ALL A LIFT HOME.
BZZH BZZH
HURRY UP, Y'ALL.
SHUT

OH!
...TELL YOSHIKI I HOPE HE FEELS BETTER...

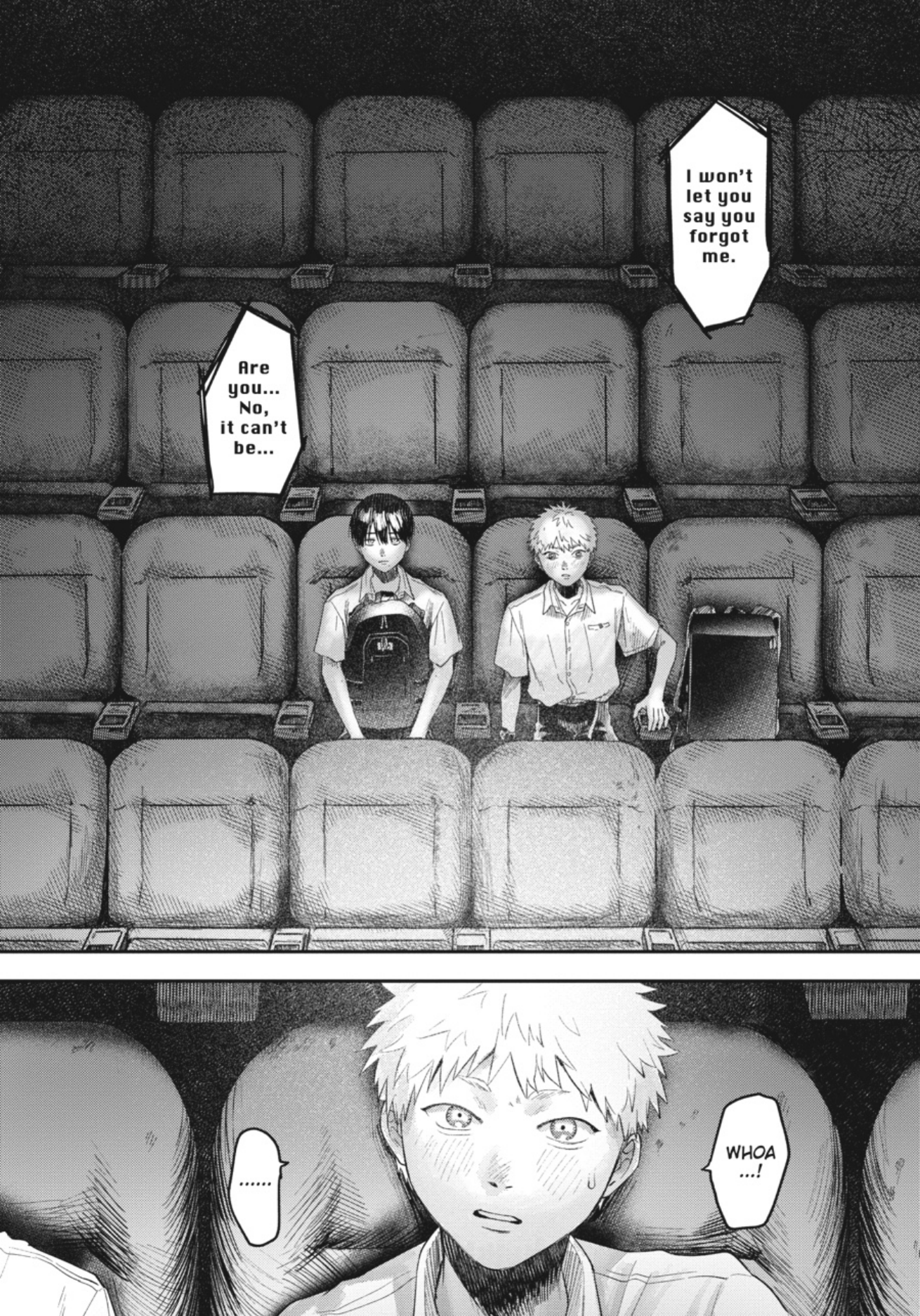
BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
ALL RIGHT.
SEE YA AT SCHOOL TOMOR-ROW.
BZZH BZZH

...YEAH, I'LL LET HIM KNOW.

MASTER
MASTER
MASTER
HNH...

RATTLE RATTLE RATTLE
LET'S GET TA SCHOOL, HIKARU.
CHIRP!
CHIRP!
CHIRP...

HEY...
WHRRR
HUH ...?
WHY? AIN'T HE MAD ABOUT THE OTHER DAY?
TODAY ...
...YOU WANNA SKIP SCHOOL?
HUH?


I won't let you say you forgot me.
Are you... No, it can't be...
WHOA ...!
.....

GLANCE
ちら

...NO, I AM.
I'M JUST WONDERIN' IF YER MAD AT ME FOR THE OTHER DAY...

Y' AIN'T HAVIN' FUN?

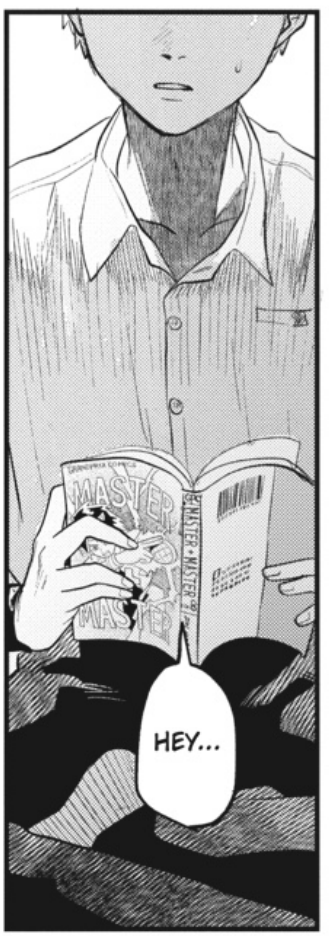
NAW, NOT REALLY... I AIN'T MAD.
YA WANTED TO WATCH THIS MOVIE, RIGHT?
SO WATCH IT.

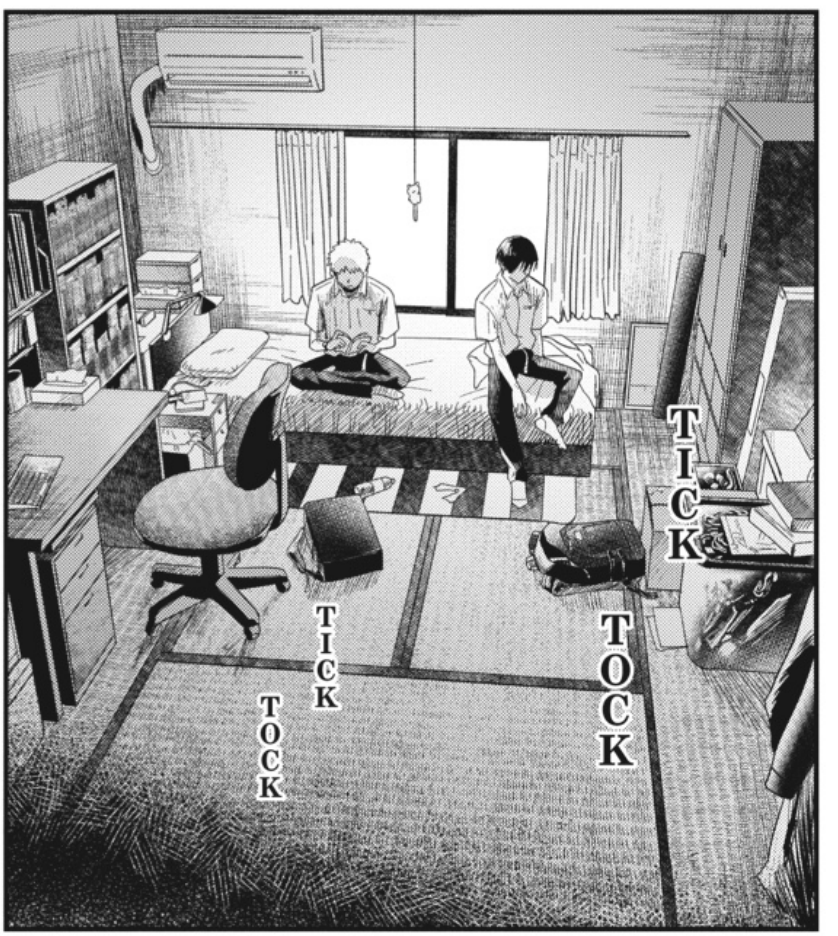
EN MART
YEAH.
GOIN' TO THE CONVENIENCE STORE?
CINEMA KIBOGAYAMA
NEM
BZZH BZZH BZZH
HM?
TOSS
CRUNCHY-KUN
SODA
IT'S SCARY!
WHAT...? WHY'S HE BEIN' SO NICE...?
HUH? THANKS ...

BZZH BZZH BZZH
BZZH BZZH BZZH
BZZH BZZH B
AH, YEAH... IT'S LIKE THEY PUT A WEIRD AMOUNT OF EFFORT INTA DRAWIN' THOSE EYEBROWS...
THEY WERE ALWAYS MOVIN'.
SO, IN THE MOVIE, DIDN'T THE MAIN GUY'S EYEBROWS BOTHER YOU?
BZZH BZZH BZZH
HEY. IS IT ALL RIGHT TO SKIP LIKE THIS?
HA HA! WHAT KIND OF MOVIE WAS THAT?
IT RELIED TOO MUCH ON EYE-BROWS.
THE ANIMATOR MIGHTA DIED EXHAUSTIN' ALL THEIR ENERGY ON THEM EYEBROWS.
BZZH BZZH BZZH

BZZH BZZH BZZH
OUR ATTENDANCE IS USUALLY PRETTY GOOD...
...SO COACH HARA WON'T GET MAD.
OH, AND YOUR ICE POP'S MELTIN'.
HUH?
OH!
AHH!
YEAH ...
BZZH BZZH BZZH BZZH
SPLAT
AW!
HEH.
YER ICE POP DIED.

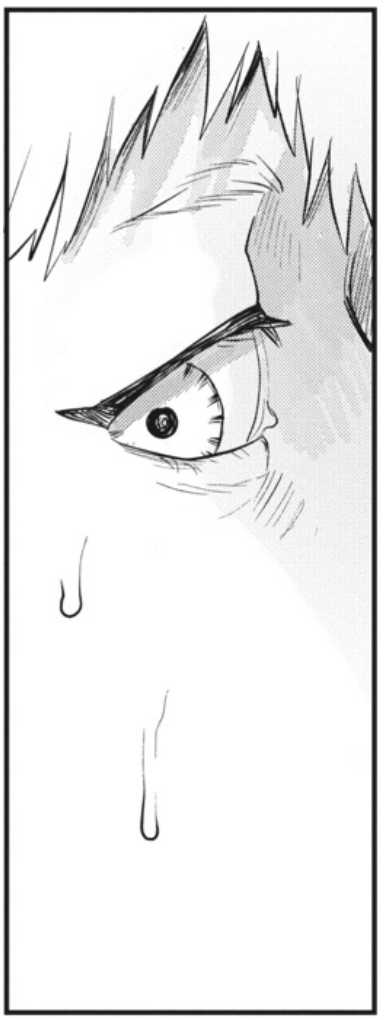
IN THE END, WE SKIPPED SCHOOL JUST TO COME BACK TO YOUR PLACE...
IT'S FINE, AIN'T IT?
KAORU WENT TO WORK WITH MY MOM ANYWAY.


HEY...


TICK
TOCK
TICK
TOCK

GRANDPRIX COMICS
MASTER
GPC
MASTER + MA
SO IN MASTER + MASTER...
...I WONDER WHY RON AND TSUMO GET ALONG SO WELL.

HEY...
WHY, HUH...?



ELEVEN VOLUMES, AND—
SHUNK

HUH ...?

HAAH!
HFF!
FF!
HAH!
HFF!
HAFF!
!

YO-
SHIKI
...?

I KNEW
IT...
YOU
WON'T
DIE...

SORRY.
I'M SORRY .....
I THOUGHT ...
...THAT I HAD TO...
...
...TEACH YOU...
.....
I WANTED TA AT LEAST...
...MAKE SURE YA HAD FUN IN YER FINAL MOMENT ...
SO!
...SO TODAY ...
...YOU PLANNED TO DO THIS...
...FROM THE VERY START ...?
IF YOU WON'T DIE...

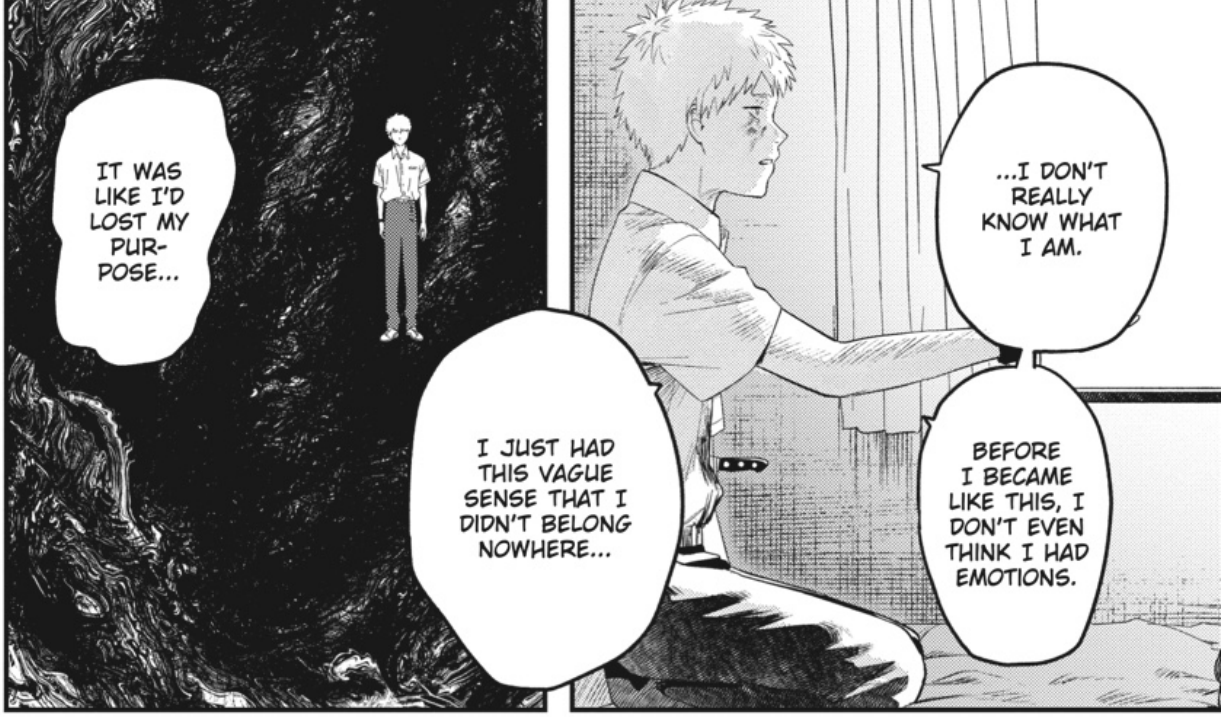
HAA!
ドク BA-DUM
HFF!
ドク BA-DUM
HAH!
ドク BA-DUM
...THEN KILL ME...
DO I APOLOGIZE? IT'S TOO MUCH. IT'S TOO MUCH. WHAT DO I DO? YOSHIKI. I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING. WHAT SHOULD I DO? SORRY. I HAVE TO THINK OF SOMETHING. I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING. WHAT DO I DO? I DON'T WANNA DO THIS.
WHAT DO I DO? HE HATES ME! HE HATES ME! HE DON'T NEED ME NO MORE? WHAT SHOULD I DO? DO I KILL HIM? DO I KILL HIM? DO I KILL HIM? SORRY. SORRY. WHAT DO I DO? WHAT DO I DO? WHAT DO I DO? WHAT DO I DO?
HFF!
HAH!
HAA!

...!
I JUST DON'T VALUE LIFE MUCH... THAT'S FOR SURE.
THIS AIN'T THE TIME TO BE CRYIN'.
I BET... THAT'S THE PROBLEM.
CLENCH

NGH
...
SHOVE
WAIT A SEC.
...!
WHAT'RE YOU DOIN'?

RIP
ぶちっ
RIP
ぶちっ
RIP
ぶちっ
HAAAH…
HAAAH…
ずるDRAG…
ずるDRAG…
YO-SHIKI.

TAKE THIS.
IT'S HALF OF MY INSIDES.
I JUST RIPPED IT OUT.
I STILL DON'T REALLY GET HOW IMPORTANT LIFE CAN BE.
BUT WITH THIS...
...I'VE BECOME SMALL ENOUGH THAT I CAN'T EASILY KILL NO ONE.
YOU...
WHY'RE YA DOIN' ALL THIS FOR ME...?


IT WAS LIKE I'D LOST MY PUR-POSE...
I JUST HAD THIS VAGUE SENSE THAT I DIDN'T BELONG NOWHERE...
...I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT I AM.
BEFORE I BECAME LIKE THIS, I DON'T EVEN THINK I HAD EMOTIONS.

BUT FOR SOME REASON, I DIDN'T WANNA DO THAT...
...I THOUGHT I'D JUST KILL YA IF YA FOUND ME OUT.
...AT FIRST...

AND IN THE END, YOU ACCEPTED ME, DIDN'CHA?
OKAY...
...*"HIKARU."* NICE TO MEET YA.

THAT'S WHAT I'D BEEN MISSING ALL ALONG.
AND I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE ALL RIGHT TO STAY HERE.
THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME I FELT LIKE I WAS NEEDED.
FOR WHATEVER REASON...
...YOU BECAME THE PLACE WHERE I BELONG.
AND FOR ME...
...THAT'S INCREDI-BLY...
...IM-POR-TANT...

I'M FINE WITH THAT.
FOR ME... THAT'S JUST FINE.
LIKE A DUCKLING WHO IMPRINTED ON ITS MAMA...
THAT'S ALL IT IS...
MAKES SENSE THAT HE WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT A LIFE IS.
THE WORLD HE SEES IS... JUST SO DIFFERENT...
STILL, I...

I REALLY AM...
... SUCH A...
...FOOL, HUH...?

I'LL BE WITH YOU NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO.
EVEN IF SOMETHING IN ME BREAKS...
IF YOU REALLY WANNA STAY HERE...
.....
BUT... Y'KNOW ... ...IT MIGHT BE THAT YOU DON'T BELONG HERE.

...THEN LET'S DO SOME RESEARCH ...

...AND FIGURE OUT EXACTLY WHAT YOU ARE.
VOLUME 3 END

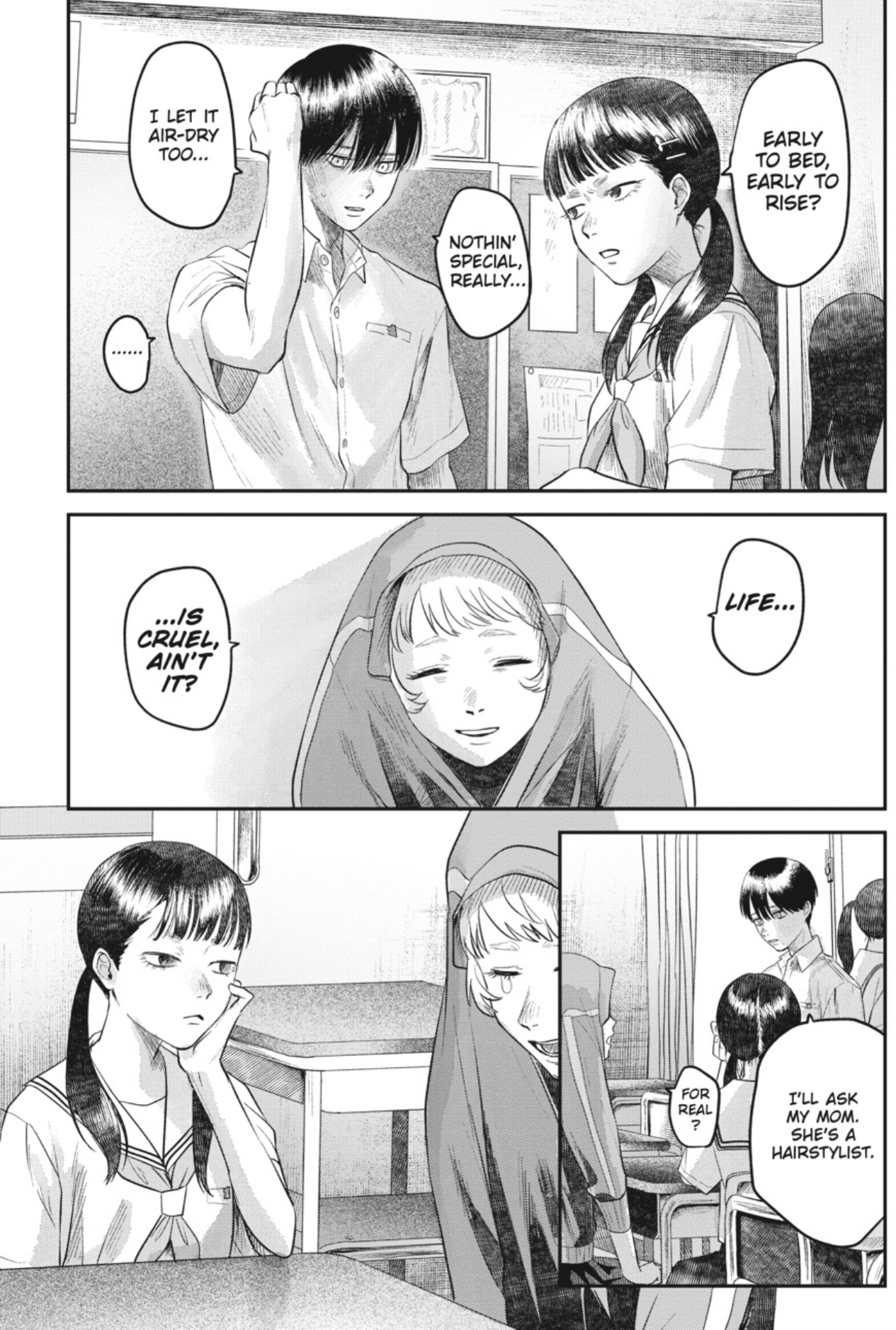
NO MATTER HOW DOWN YOU ARE, YOU'LL AT LEAST EAT.

HEY.
HOW MUCH LONGER YOU GONNA PLAY PIKMIN FOR?
I'LL RESET IF A SINGLE ONE DIES.
I WON'T LET 'EM DIE...NOT A ONE...

BONUS
...WHAT'S UP, ASAKO?
SHE OVERSLEPT THIS MORNIN', AN' HER HAIR'S A HOT MESS.
SURE IS...
YER THINKIN' THESE CURLS AIN'T NO BIG DEAL, AINT'CHA !?
'COS THEY'RE A REAL PAIN IN THE ASS, Y'KNOW!
CAN'T BE AS WEIRD AS WHAT YER WEARIN' NOW... YOU LOOK LIKE A MONSTER...

POOF
ぼん
SEEEE? IT TAKES A LOT OF WORK TO TAME 'EM EVERY DAY!
THEY HAVE A LOT OF VOLUME, THAT'S FOR SURE.
WHOA.
IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, THEY USED TO CALL ME "AKAN-KO," LIKE THE FAMOUS LAKE...
OH, THE ONE WITH THE MOSS BALLS.
IT'S CUTE, THOUGH. YOU LOOK LIKE A BICHON FRISE.

I ENVY Y'ALL.
YOU AND YOSHIKI...
...BOTH HAVE SILKY STRAIGHT HAIR. WISH I HAD HAIR LIKE YOU TWO.
HIKARU'S HAIR'S A LITTLE CURLY, RIGHT?
AND MAKI... WELL, HIS HEAD'S SHAVED, SO WHO KNOWS.
IT AIN'T BOTHERSOME WHEN YER HAIR'S AS SHORT AS HIKARU'S.
HOW DO YOU TWO GET YER HAIR SO SILKY LIKE THAT?


EARLY TO BED, EARLY TO RISE?
NOTHIN' SPECIAL, REALLY...
I LET IT AIR-DRY TOO...
.....
LIFE...
...IS CRUEL, AIN'T IT?
I'LL ASK MY MOM. SHE'S A HAIRSTYLIST.
FOR REAL?

I'LL TEACH YOU HOW TO BRAID!

HUH?
LEMME BORROW YA FOR A SEC.
AH-CHAN.
WOOOOW!!
THIS IS GREAT!
WOW!
WOOOW!
HEH.
I THOUGHT THIS MIGHT KEEP THAT VOLUME UNDER CONTROL A BIT...

I AIN'T CLUMSY. I JUST DON'T TRY.
YER USUALLY SO CLUMSY WITH EVERYTHING— 'CEPT WHEN IT COMES TO COOKIN', THAT IS ...
HOW'D YOU DO THIS?
WHEN I PUT MY HEART INTO IT, SOMETHING LIKE THIS...
...IS A CINCH!
I'M FALLING FOR YOU ALL OVER AGAIN!

ASAKO AND YUUKI?
YEAH, THEY'RE CLOSE, HUH?

WHAT'CHA SMILIN' ABOUT? IT'S CREEPY.
NAW ...
...IT'S JUST SORTA... HEART-WARMIN', AIN'T IT?

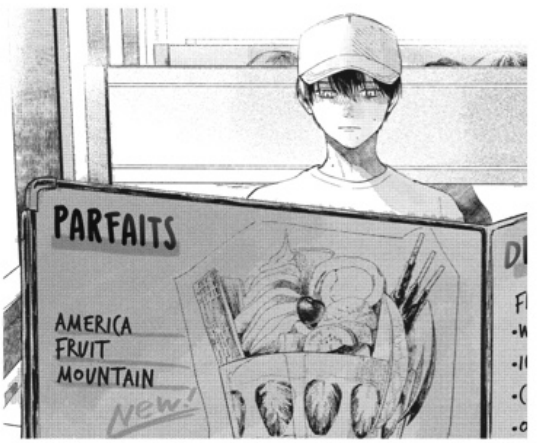
THEY'VE BEEN IN THE SAME SCHOOL SINCE MIDDLE SCHOOL...
...BUT THEY'RE CHILDHOOD FRIENDS, RIGHT? SEEIN' HOW THEIR PARENTS ARE FRIENDS, AND THEY'VE BEEN AROUND EACH OTHER SINCE THEY WERE YOUNG.
THEY SURE ARE.

.....
YO-SHIKI.
THAT'S NICE...
HUH ...?
WHAT ARE YA GONNA DO?
I WANNA PRACTICE BRAIDIN' ON YA.
C'MERE A SEC.
UH...
WHAT ...?

BONUS END

HE SINGS SUPER-
SOFTLY WHENEVER
HIS CLASS SINGS
THE SCHOOL SONG
TOGETHER.

Q&A



Q I'd like to know if Yoshiki and Hikaru have a "type."

—— Yoshiki likes "someone with admirable qualities," and before he died, Hikaru preferred "someone who's healthy and has a big chest." The concept doesn't register for "Hikaru," so he doesn't really know what it means to have a "type."

Q What do Hikaru and Yoshiki most often order from the menu at America?

—— A lot of spaghettilike dishes. After they've eaten at America, both of them usually eat dinner at home too.

Q Since becoming "Hikaru," has he experienced any physical growth, like the length of his hair and nails or his height? If his body were to completely stop growing, I'm sure people would start to notice eventually, but I'm curious if the new "Hikaru" is able to mimic such unknown territory as the form Hikaru would have grown into.

—— Since becoming "Hikaru," his hair, nails, and height have continued to develop as usual, so he's physically growing. However, I think the way "Hikaru" is growing is slightly different from how Hikaru would've grown if he were still alive.

Q Why is Yoshiki older than everyone else?

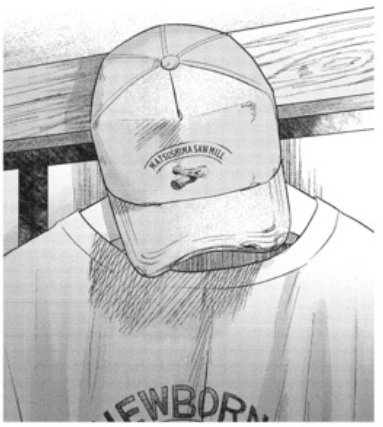
—— Yoshiki's birthday is April 20, and Hikaru's birthday is March 20 of the following year. In Japan, where the school year starts at the beginning of April, that puts them in the same grade. They're nearly a year apart, so Yoshiki matured faster when they were younger, but I wouldn't say that's exactly the case now.

Q I get the sense that Yoshiki-kun isn't the type to actively seek out friends on his own. Can you tell us how he became friends with Asako-chan and the others?

——Yoshiki, Hikaru, Asako, and Yuuki all went to the same middle school, and since the school was small, they naturally became friends, regardless of gender. Maki joined them in high school, but it wasn't until Hikaru started palling around with him that he became a part of their group.

Q And what are Maki's, Asako's, and Yuuki's full names?

——Yuuta Maki, Asako Yamagishi, and Yuuki Tadokoro.



Q Why does Hikaru call his parents "Mama" and "Daddy," but Yoshiki calls his parents "Mom" and "Dad"?

——They were both born in the same village, but Yoshiki's mom is from Tokyo and doesn't have a regional accent, so it just naturally happened.

Q Hikaru wears a watch on his right arm, so is he left-handed?

—— Hikaru is right-handed, but he wears a wristwatch for left-handed people. The watch was a gift from his dad, but his dad was a bit out of touch with highbrow stuff like that and mistakenly bought Hikaru a left-handed watch.

Q What are Hikaru/"Hikaru"'s and Yoshiki's shoe sizes?

—— At the moment, Hikaru/"Hikaru" wears a 26 cm (US 8), and Yoshiki wears 27.5 cm (US 9.5).

Q Why does "Hikaru" "feel good" when someone has their hand inside him...? I'm also curious to know whether it "feels good" in a sense of it being pleasurable or relaxing.

—— I personally believe that humans feel the most pleasure when their primal desires are fulfilled, and for a nonhuman like "Hikaru," the act of taking something inside his body is his equivalent to that primal instinct. His instincts are likely the biggest difference between "Hikaru" and humans, which suggests he experiences some sensations that would be incomprehensible to humans.

Afterword

THANK YOU FOR READING VOLUME 3. THE NEXT VOLUME MARKS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ARC, SO I SINCERELY HOPE YOU'LL CONTINUE SUPPORTING THIS SERIES!

MOKUMOKUREN

ASSISTANTS

SARINA HIRAKAWA
NOMU

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Next Volume Preview

What exactly *is* *Hikaru?*

The time to face the truth draws near.

THE SUMMER

HIKARU

DIED

continues in Volume 4...

THE SUMMER

HIKARU

DIED

TRANSLATION NOTES

COMMON HONORIFICS

***-san*:** The Japanese equivalent of Mr./Mrs./Miss. If a situation calls for politeness, this is the fail-safe honorific.
***-sama*:** Conveys great respect; may also indicate that the social status of the speaker is lower than that of the addressee.
***-kun*:** Used most often when referring to boys, this indicates affection or familiarity. Occasionally used by older men among their peers, but it may also be used by anyone referring to a person of lower standing.
***-chan*:** An affectionate honorific indicating familiarity used mostly in reference to girls; also used in reference to cute persons or animals regardless of gender.
no honorific: Indicates familiarity or closeness; if used without permission or reason, addressing someone in this manner would constitute an insult.
-niisan, nii-san, aniki, etc.: A term of endearment meaning "big brother" that may be more widely used to address any young man who is like a brother, regardless of whether he is related or not.

GENERAL

Hikaru: The Chinese character for Hikaru's name means "light."

PAGE 73

Nashitetsu: This game title is a parody of a popular board game–like video game that sends players all around Japan trying to amass the most wealth.

THE SUMMER HIKARU DIED

MOKUMOKUREN

3

TRANSLATION: AJANI OLOYE

LETTERING: ABIGAIL BLACKMAN

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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